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THE
PRINCESS;
OR
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THE BÉGUINE.

BY LADY MORGAN,
AUTHOR OF "O'DONNEL," ETC.

"She was one of those kind of nuns, an' please your honour, of which your honour knows there are a good many in Flanders, which they let go loose."—"By thy description, Trim," said my Uncle Toby, "I dare say she was a young Béguine."

TRISTRAM SHANDY.



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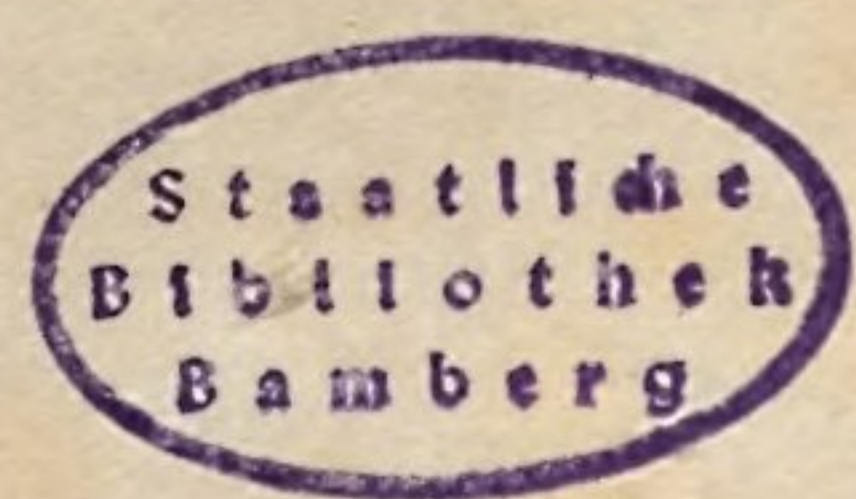
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THE BEGGINE

BY LADY MARGERY

AUTHOR OF "HONOURABLE" ETC.

THE BEGGINE, a story of the life of a poor girl, of which your heart, of which your
heart knows that it is a good story, which they feel to be good. It is
the description of a girl, who was a poor girl, who was a poor girl, who was a poor girl.



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FRANKFURT O.M.

THE WILHELM PUBLISHER OF ARTS AND LITERATURE.

THE PRINCESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE OPERA.

Croiriez-vous que je reviens de l'Opéra ! La fête se faisait pour l'abbé Arnauld, qui n'en a pas vu, depuis Urbain VIII, qu'il était à Rome. Il en a été fort content ; je suis chargée des complimens de toute sa loge.

Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, vol. III. p. 10.

A PARTY at the Opera arranged for the special entertainment of the bishop of Angers, one of the most pious prelates of the Gallican church, and in the reign, too, of one of the most pious of the French kings ! A strange trait of manners this, and yet one only in a myriad, proving that hostility to theatrical exhibitions formed no principle of the church's original system.

By the introduction of 'mysteries,' the clergy laid the foundation for the revival of the drama—fallen into oblivion, with the other arts of civilization, on the destruction of the Roman empire. Dramatic entertainments also were long the favourite festivities in the palaces of Roman cardinals ; and even popes did not disdain to patronise the stage ; while the episcopal church of England, long after the restoration of the Stuarts, showed its abhorrence of puritanical

republicanism by its indulgence to the drama, to which some of its members directly contributed.

The private theatricals of Whitehall are on pleasant record. The duke's daughters, the ladies Mary and Anne (the future most orthodox queens of England), played in the same pieces with Mesdames Knight, Davis, and Butler, and "the cattel of that sort," as Evelyn phrases it; and the king's chaplains and the church's prelates assisted with as little reserve as the French bishop of Angers showed in visiting Madame de Sévigné's box at the Grand Opera.

Down to the middle of the long reign of George the Third, the stage was considered as a subsidiary school for morals, and the Opera as a royal academy of arts. Both escaped alike the reprobation and the interference of spiritual legislation; and it was not until the downfall of the French church, in the summit of its power, wealth, and abuses, had given the alarm to all other churches, that an ultra-rigorous observance of ceremonious forms, savouring more of Calvin than of Luther, decreed that, at the King's Theatre of London, the curtain should drop on Saturday nights precisely as the clock struck twelve. It mattered not what interests might be broken, what unities violated, what *entrechats* might be left uncut, what *pirouettes* suspended: the curfew-bell of the olden times tolled not with more effect than the prompter's bell knelled the parting Saturday night, and ushered in the dawn of the coming Sabbath.

Sin and sanctity thus brought into juxta-position even to an instant of time, the interdiction seems to have operated as an excitement; and Saturday night became a vogue, from the very anathema which sought to place it under the ban of public opinion. For nearly the quarter of a century afterwards, a box upon that night doubled its value; and the lessees found an indemnity in this harvest for the losses incurred by those less productive representations which the church's censure had not rendered fashionable.

In the summer of 1833, there were added to the charm of fashion the more intrinsic attractions of a rare combination of professional excellence. Genius of the highest order—Rossini, Mozart, and Bellini,—talents of the very first calibre—Pasta, Malibran, Rubini, Tamburini, and Taglioni—ruled, each at the head of their several departments, over the passions and tastes of society.

Illustrators of arts which none can profess but the highly-organized

(the “ exclusives ” of nature’s own selection), they would have received from poetical antiquity the highest honours : for what did antiquity possess—what have its sciences or its arts left, in poetry or marble, superior to the dramatic pathos of the ‘ Medea,’ or the enchanting graces of the ‘ Sylphide’ !

It happened that the hottest Saturday night of the hot month of June, in the season alluded to, witnessed the closest-packed audience at the King’s Theatre, that any King’s Theatre at any season ever exhibited. Not a stall was vacant, not a seat in the pit was unoccupied ; while the boxes, teeming with beauty and resplendent with dress, rendered the spectacle *devant la scène* as attractive as that upon it. Neither the sombre magnificence of the Scala, nor the fairy glories of San Carlos, are comparable, for general effect, to the spectacle presented on such a night in the Opera-house of London. The theatres of Italy are antique temples ; the theatres of Germany are dark dens ; but the London Opera-house, *malgré* its calico draperies and paltry decorations, is a Colosseum of living beauty and brilliancy unmatched in Europe.

The cause of the unusual concourse, on this particular night, was the concentration of all the talents which had each separately filled the house on former representations—the brightest inspirations of Rossini and Bellini—the union of the high classical *seria* of Pasta, with the brilliant and pure *buffa* of Malibran, and the poetry of Taglioni’s epic dance !

Every corner therefore was crowded, save only that one box which, as in a microcosm, is wont to contain the very quintessentiality of the fashion and ton of London. This box, destined to be known to posterity by the style and title of “ the Omnibus, ” lies in the pit tier, on the left or king’s side of the house, and so close to the stage, that the Marquis of Montessor, its *doyen* and founder, numbered from it, for a wager, every spangle on the glittering slipper of Fanny Elsler, as she paused from her tiptoe *pose*, to curtsy her gratitude for applause to the house in general, and to his lordship in particular.

In the seventeenth century, the *bel air* of Paris took their station on the stage, within view of the audience, some in ball-dresses, some “ *en bandit* ; ” while those of the same class and rank, who happened to have been discovered in forgeries, or other frauds, then

in vogue at the court, took refuge among the footmen. In the nineteenth century, the *bel air* of London resorted to the Omnibus—a joint-stock company assemblage of supreme ton and hypercriticism.

The origin of this incorporation probably lay in a desire to judge of the points and steps of the priestesses of Terpsichore with the naked eye; but, like many other foundations, it soon derogated from its primeval character, and became the vogue, without reference to any particular object. It was the fashion to be a member of the Omnibus, because the numbers were limited—because it enabled a man to cut his mother's family box, to get rid of his wife's set, or to have a house of refuge against the necessity of occupying his own high-paid place in the box of some autocrateess of fashion, to which it is a distinction to subscribe and a bore to be confined.

The subscription-list of the Omnibus was always complete in its numbers, vacancies being promptly filled, and transferable tickets, though not strictly forbidden, difficult to be had. Usually, however, it remained empty till the close of the Opera; but it was *de rigueur* that it should have its complement of connoisseurship by the first act of the ballet.

The 'Cenerentola' and the 'Anna Bolena' had exhausted the extremes of sensation, leaving no cool suspense between all that is exquisite in pleasure and in pain; and the 'Sylphide' had already winged her airy flight up the chimney, but the Omnibus was still unoccupied, except by the eternal Marquis Montessor, who, true to the first bar of the overture of the ballet, sat with his elbows resting on the front of the box, his chin upon his hands, his soul (*tale quale*) in his eyes, and his eyes on the "many-twinkling feet" of some favourite odalisque of the evening. Uttering his *bravas*, "deep but not loud," he remained so absorbed, that even the opening of the box-door, its being shut with a violence that called forth the disapprobation of the pit, and the pouncing of a new-comer on the seat beside him, failed to withdraw his attention from a performance which he was seeing for the twenty-second time.

Nothing in nature or in art could be more opposite than the members of this *tête-à-tête*. Lord Montessor was formed in the prodigality of nature as to the *matériel*. His corpulency resisted every restraint of art (and none was spared) to shape it into symmetry.

His countenance resisted every attempt to mould it to any expression more decided than the languishing simper of a *ci-devant jeune homme*, or the sneer of aristocratic morgue. High and hard living had alone left its trace and tint on a face which afforded a broad field for the display of both; and "bewigged," though not "rouged," at forty-six, his lordship exhibited one of the last remaining impersonations of the profligacy and ton which the then nearly-extinct court of Carlton-house had left behind it.

The new-arrival, on the contrary, was a prime-of-life man, and of a totally different appearance. His tall, slight, undulating figure still retained an air of youthful elasticity; but high temples, and a brow indented with the impressions of thought, denoted a longer acquaintance with the realities of life. Clusters of light chestnut curls were thrown off the forehead almost to the back of a finely-formed head. A complexion pale to sickliness, fine but deep-set eyes, a restless and unquiet glance, a brow in perpetual movement, and an expression of *malaise*, clouding—almost distorting—a very intellectual countenance,—assigned Sir Frederick Mottram (in a moral sense at least) to the "uneasy classes" of society.

He was altogether a fine specimen of the Saxon race, of which a few only, in right of their wealth, sometimes find their way among the Norman gentry of the land. Though well dressed, he still wanted something of the air of fashion which was spread over the naturally vulgar form of the highly-descended Marquis,—something of that conventional mystery, so difficult to define, and so unworthy of the effort to analyse it: but he supplied the deficiency by a characteristic *nonchalance*, the result, perhaps, of apathy, or of ill health. He was near-sighted also, and looked as if he only saw the world through the medium of a clearing-glass.

On entering the Omnibus, he flung himself on a seat, with his back against the partition of the neighbouring box, and turned from the audience; but his eyes were not directed to the stage—they were closed against its brilliancy. After a few minutes, however, he took up an opera-glass, reconnoitred the house, and throwing up "a look malign askance" at the opposite tier, he again suddenly withdrew his eyes, opened the *libretto* of the "Norma," and commenced reading that ode to the living Norma, whose poetry is so far beyond the usual strain of such compositions.

It was not till Lord Montessor (whose brother, Lord John, was the husband of Sir Frederick Mottram's only sister) had bravoed off his " Cynthia of the minute, " and thrown himself back in his chair to repose his hands and eyes during the performance of the *figurantes*, that he perceived the presence of the new spectator. The discovery gave to his vacant face a slight expression of astonishment.

" Hollo ! Mottram," he said, " you here ! *cosa rara* ! To think of you being anywhere but at St. Stephen's ! Have you got a subscription, or did my brother John leave you his ticket ? Poor fellow ! I know it is in the market. " (Lord John had recently *levanted* to Paris.)

His lordship's question was negatived in a tone expressive of as much disgust and contempt as a monosyllable could convey.

" You very rarely honour the Opera with your presence now, " continued Lord Montessor, yawning.

" Very rarely," was the sulky reply.

" Do you really never go to your own box,—that is, to Lady Frances's ? "

" Never. "

" You, too, who are such a *fanatico* for music ! "

" That perhaps is the reason. "

" Why, they *do* keep up an infernal noise there. Since they have thrown Lady Frances's and the Princess of Schaffenhause's boxes into one, they have always a set of noisy boys about them—sucking senators, dandy guardsmen, and pert *attachés*. Devilish bad taste that—it would have sunk a woman in the good old times of the Regency ! No man was qualified for service then under forty—just as in the French Chambers. "

Lord Montessor raised his glass, and fixing it at Lady Frances's box, he asked, " Who is that *beau blondin* peeping over your wife's shoulder ? "

" Don't know in the least. "

" Why, how the devil should you, with your back turned, and your eyes shut ! Oh, I see ; it is cousin Claude Campbell—*le petit page d'amour*, as the Princess calls him. Lady Frances has more of his services than their Royal Highnesses—I suppose she gives him more sugar-plums ! Look at the little villain, nestling between Lady

Frances and the Princess! He is in waiting, too, this week; but the Duke, perhaps, is in the House.—I say, Mottram, will you dine with me on the twentieth? I must have him—I mean the Duke: shall I send your name in the list?”

“No.”

“What, not meet the Duke! *Par exemple!* You are not going to take office under the Whigs, are you?”

“No!”

“Why won’t you meet his Royal Highness, then?”

“Because I am engaged.”

“Engaged! Nonsense—that goes for nothing when one is invited to meet the royalties—Brava, brava, bravissima!”

The return of the dancing deity, at whose shrine Lord Montessor worshipped, cut short his comment on the etiquette of royal invitations; for she was cutting a pirouette immediately under his eye. He saw he was *danced at*; and his idle garrulity gave place to the gratification of a vanity which was never idle. He nodded his consciousness of her implied homage to his judgment, and gave free scope to his rapturous connoisseurship.

“*Brava, brava, la petite Mimmie! pas mal, la belle enfant!* That girl improves rapidly; she wants only muscle—nothing but that. It may easily be acquired. Do you know, you may train a figure to anything!—may indeed—quite a science. I’ll tell you how I manage with Mimmie: I tie up her ankles in bootikins like a race-horse, make her steep her feet in arrow-root when she comes off the stage, and never allow her to sup on anything heavier than the wing of a gelinotte, which I import for her from Brussels.—Apropos to gelinottes and to Brussels—we had the Belgian business on in our House last night, so I bolted early. I have had enough of ‘the happy effects’ of the protocol system; they are abundantly exemplified in national bankruptcy and a standing army—don’t you think so?”

“No.”

“Why, you spoke the other night as if you did: you ridiculed Palmerston’s ‘early settlement of the Belgico-Dutch question.’”

Sir Frederick either did not, or would not hear this remark.

“By the bye,” continued Lord Montessor, “what have you been doing in your House to-night; for it seems you sat this evening *par extraordinaire*. Aubrey told me you got a mauling from one of

the Irish *Mimbers*, one of your 'honourable friends in the dirty shirt.' Ha! ha! ha! You took nothing from the Paddies, you see, by your Relief vote! We told you half-and-half men that long ago, but you would not believe us.—Brava, dirty Sal! How she flounders and flounces about, poor fat thing!

"Do you know why she is called dirty Sal? for, *par parenthèse*, she's as fresh as a rose. It's because she's put off with all the cast dresses of the wardrobe—*C'est une si bonne pâte!* I remember her quite beautiful. She was a mere child in D'Egville's time, and *fit fortune* in '*La Belle Laitière*.' She was then very near making head against Parisot—she was indeed! but she fell early into fat. It was your wife, above all persons in the world, told me she was called dirty Sal. Claude Campbell told her. You know, I suppose, that he is a little *prince de coulisse*? I never miss him at a *répétition* of a new ballet. A promising boy that—nothing like a year's diplomacy at Vienna, to finish a Westminster boy. They say it was you got him made an *attaché*, and sent him away to get rid of him, because he was such a nuisance! Always stumbling over him, like a French poodle or a footstool."

"Then they say a confounded lie!" burst forth Sir Frederick Mottram vehemently, and throwing down the *libretto*. "I have no interest with the ministry; and if I had, I should not exert it for such a whelp as that."

"Yes,—he's just that—spoiled by the women. I hear he was recalled for riding at the public races in a tri-coloured jacket, while the Excellency, his *chef*, actually rode his own famous *Principessa* in orange silk—no joke that. But you're not going, are you, before Taglioni has danced her *pas seul*?"

Sir Frederick had risen unconsciously; every muscle was in movement, his whole frame tremulous with irascibility.

"Oh! so, if you are going to your wife's box, I'll go with you. I want to make my excuses to the Princess for not supping with her to night;" and he added significantly, "*Je donne à souper*, myself. There is such a rage for suppers on Saturday nights after the Opera! I wonder Sir Andrew does not attack it. Shall we go?"

Sir Frederick resumed his seat, and throwing his arm on the box, and directing his attention to the divine dancing of Taglioni, replied,

“I am not going to my wife’s box ; but pray don’t let me interfere with you.”

“I see you are out of sorts to-night, Mottram—all ajar. Aubrey told me that they had badgered you in the House into one of your fits of humour. You broke loose, he said, in a fine style—quite Demosthenic—and were left on your legs in your second hour, when he came away.”

“Which makes silence and a seat a great luxury,” said Sir Frederick languidly, and resuming his old position.

“Yes, you *have* the air of being devilishly bored, just now.”

“*Just now*, I am,” was the sharp reply.

“A pleasant bear-garden your House of Commons,—the ‘Reformed Deformed,’ as Lord Allington calls them! and, what’s worse, such a set of vulgarians, whose acquaintance you are obliged to admit *out*, as well as *in* the House! You must be continually exposed to coming in contact with some talking blockhead.”

“I am,” said Sir Frederick, “very much exposed.”

“Were I you,” said lord Montessor, pointing his glass at the opposite side, “I would cut dead—”

“I should like it much,” said Sir Frederick, with irrepressible petulance.

“Well, I must go to the Belgian Princess, and make my excuse. Her German etiquette is so susceptible, you have no idea.”

Lord Montessor then rose, hurried on his fool’s cap without its bells, and left the box as the curtain dropt on the first act of the ballet.

Sir Frederick settled himself into a corner, in the full luxury of that solitude which it is possible to enjoy even in an opera box. Bringing his glass to the proper focus and to a permanent position, he rivetted his entire attention on the interior of his wife’s box ; for he had come to the Opera that night from the House of Commons, for the purpose of watching the movements of some of its occupants.

Lady Frances Mottram, an epitome of English female fashion, resembled in her look and air the beauties of the Whitehall galaxy of Charles the Second’s court. Fair, *fade*, and languishing, her dress, and full blonde tresses *frisées au naturel*, gave her the character of one of Sir Peter Lely’s portraits, “stepped from out its”—frame. Her type was *La belle Jennings*; and as far as

depended upon her historical costume, her success was perfect. Still extremely handsome, if she had ceased to be extremely young, she wore the appearance of one in perpetual ambuscade, *pour surprendre les cœurs*, with all that coquetry which, on the verge of middle life, seeks to catch the lingering charm of youth, and to fix by art the influence which nature once commanded without an effort.

In a dress which, in less fantastic times, would have rendered her the object of the night,—and which, even in the actual era of pictorial effect, infringed on the licence of fashion beyond all example, save that of her eccentric foreign friend and inseparable companion, the Princess of Schaffenhauseu—Lady Frances Mottram sat in evidence before two thousand spectators with the same ease and indifference as she would have done in her own drawing-room; her head thrown back, her fine arm stretched to its utmost length in the front of the box, and her full sleeve of white brocade falling over it with an effect which tempted an Irish artist, * on the opposite side of the house, to sketch her for a figure in his admirable collection of antique costumes. She was listening with downcast eyes to some observation of the Princess of Schaffenhauseu, who stood in profile to the audience, as if in the act of departure, and, as it seemed to the intense gaze of Sir Frederick, of dictation.

The appearance of the Princess was, indeed, that of one to whom the consciousness of some special supremacy gave a right to dictate. Her figure was erect, her outline severe, her hand raised, and her forefinger pointed, as if in warning or reproof. She was dressed in a costume of other times, and of a country and society more remote than that adopted by Lady Frances. The widow of a Belgian Prince, of a Count of the Empire and a *Grand d'Espagne*, she had assumed the singular habiliments in which a former Princess of Schaffenhauseu (*camerara mayor* to the Queen of Philip the Fifth) was painted by Velasquez, in a picture still extant in her collection abroad, and of which a copy, by the Princess's own pencil, ornamented her house in London.

The dress was black, rich in its texture, and voluminous in its folds; but it fitted closely to the long waist and well-defined bust,

* Probably Mr. Franklin.

which was covered by the *sabingas* (a chemise of old point lace), gathered round the throat. From her girdle, which was composed of gems and medals, hung a *cordon* of some ecclesiastical order, terminated by a cross of rubies. From a knot of brilliants, at the head of her stomacher, fell several chains of pearls, each holding an *Agnus Dei*. Her hair, of a dark gold colour (whether false or her own), was parted above her dark brows, and fell on either side in wavy tresses. Her forehead was bound by a small black band; and the whole most singular figure was set off, rather than concealed, by the Spanish mantilla of rich black lace which dropped round her, from the top of her fine-formed head, to the extreme edge of her long and flowing drapery. As she thus stood erect and commanding, contrasted with the recumbent figure and fair face of her English friend, and in the strong relief of the crimson drapery of the back-ground, the picture was perfect. It was a Leonardo da Vinci, and recalled that most beautiful of painted allegories, (the treasure of the palace Sciara,) “Modesty rebuking Vanity;” it was Reason dictating to Folly.

Sir Frederick Mottram breathed thick and short as he gazed. He then lowered his glass, as if to relieve his strained eyes, and then again he resumed it, till the combination which had attracted him was dissolved. The Belgian Princess had departed; and in her place, *vis-à-vis* to his wife, and playing with her large fan, appeared a creature as fair and as frivolous as herself. It was the young *attaché* of the British embassy at Vienna—the gentleman of the bed-chamber of a Royal Duke—the *petit page d’amour* of the Princess of Schaffhausen, and the handsome little cousin and godson of Lady Frances,—Claude Campbell.

Sir Frederick laid aside his glass, resumed his seat with his back to the audience, folded his arms, closed his eyes, and waited for the conclusion of the ballet, with the strange intention of joining his wife in the Round-room, and, for the first time for many years, of accompanying her home.

He had scarcely taken up his position, when a flush of young men (the regular occupants of the Omnibus), who had returned from a white-bait dinner at Greenwich, burst in. Sir Frederick immediately burst out, and entered the first box which lay open and empty. It still breathed of the ether which its *blasée* and

hysterical mistress, the Duchess of——, always left behind her. Originally part of a double box, it had, on some sudden dissolution of a capricious partnership, been separated by a thin, ill-constructed partition, hastily thrown up; and its counterpart was then occupied (to judge by the variety of jargons spoken among its inmates,) by a foreign congress. The company were, in fact, the representatives of the *haut ton* of the season, foreign and domestic.

Of its fluctuating society there remained, at the moment when Sir Frederick came into such close contiguity, but few. Of these Lord Allington (the wit *titré* of the day) was the most distinguished.

Lord Allington, who, like his great prototype, “never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one,” was one of those who bring talent into disrepute by indiscretions which, in the dull, pass unnoticed. His fashion, however, had survived his dilapidated fortunes; and he said so many pleasant things on his own ruin, that it seemed as if he had sacrificed his wealth to his wit. His epigrams still passed current, when his notes did not; and he got credit for his *bons-mots*, though he had lost it at his tailor’s. He had borrowed the box for the evening from an old amateur Duke, who, having become deaf, now went only to the German opera; and he had devoted it to the especial service of the Honourable Mr. and Mrs. St. Leger, recent arrivals from the Continent: with the latter he was *aux petits soins*—and with the former, a subject of that timid aversion which “dulness ever bears to wit,” upon instinct.

Mr. and Mrs. St. Leger were a rather popular couple; for she was a flirt, and he was a fool. Each therefore, by representing a very large class in the world of fashion, obtained a considerable portion of its suffrages. Mr. St. Leger had ruined his own private affairs in the outset of life; and for that reason, probably, (no other being ostensible,) he had been selected to manage those of the nation.

Among other diplomatic offices, he had recently enjoyed the honour of representing the majesty of England in a German court of the third or fourth class; where, as envoy extraordinary, he had been sent by the then ministry, to dance the *Polonaise* with dowager Mar-

gravines, play *écarté*, and truckle to legitimacy. For these services, he had enjoyed an income which exceeded that of the American president, and might have salaried the whole frugal cabinet of Belgium.

Bentham would have said, that Mr. St. Leger had maximized his wages, and minimized his services; but how could the grandson of two dukes represent without an adequate income? and in a German court, where qualities are estimated by quarterings, high birth was indispensable. It was all, therefore, *selon les règles* of legitimate diplomacy.

Reform, however, came; and, regardless of vested rights, had, among other things, recently reformed this “*petit bout de ministre*:” and the Honourable Mr. St. Leger, being no longer permitted to hang on the public purse, had returned with his wife to England, to hang on their own noble relations; to get a seat in the House *if* they could,—a seat at a dinner-table *where* they could,—a box at the Opera *when* they could,—and to join in the full cry of conservatism against a system which, whatever it may prove to the nation, was to them ruin in its fullest development.

Mrs. Montague St. Leger had rubbed against foreign courts and foreign notabilities till she had acquired a sort of European *lingua Franca*, which was a source of endless amusement to Lord Allington; and her pretty little *chiffonné* face and figure, her French toilet, Italian gestures, and German forms, had actually awakened him to a sort of fancy, which he mistook for a sentiment.

To one so satiated as Lord Allington, an emotion was a benefaction; and he exerted his gratitude in favour of his benefactress by foraging for opera-boxes on Saturday nights, and for tickets for the Zoological Gardens on Sunday mornings; advantages which neither the Duchess her grandmother, nor the Marquis her uncle, could obtain her. For fashion, like the Romish church, is an open republic; and the spirit of the one, as of the other, passes all understanding and defies all definition.

Lord Alfred Montessor, who had taken the place of an Italian Count, (vacated on the Italian preference always given to the newest arrival,) had come to announce the intention of the Princess of Schaffenhause to look in on Mrs. St. Leger before she went home; and he seemed to consider himself distinguished by the commission. Lord Alfred was the third brother of the Marquis of Montessor; and

his second brother having married a *roturière* for her wealth, he was ready to follow the example, and to marry the Princess of Schaffenhauseu for her Rhenish vineyards and Belgian forests. The position of the two brothers had alike tempted them to dependance, as the preferable alternative to beggary. The plebeian birth of Miss Mottram had not stood in the way of Lord John; and a reputation of no equivocal character was not an impediment to the speculations of Lord Alfred. In both instances, institutions were, perhaps, more in fault than they.

There was also present in the box, Colonel Winterbottam, the model of all fashionable gossips, past, present, and to come;—a gentle and genteel representative of the led captains of less civilized times, and the devoted *creato* of Lord Aubrey, (a top-sawyer of fashion, whose dulness he amused and whose corks he drew.) For the rest, Colonel Winterbottam was one whom everybody knew and nobody cared for; and he conscientiously paid back society in the coin he received from it; for he knew everybody and cared for—nobody.

Next to the Colonel sat Captain Levison, a light-hearted, light-headed, handsome young guardsman, who got rid of his burthensome vitality and unproductive activity as he best could; and who now only dropped in to the Opera from a breakfast at Norwood, in the hopes of an invitation to a supper at the Princess of Schaffenhauseu's.

The descent of Lord Alfred from Lady Frances's box was the topic of discourse, as the eyes of the party were turned up to observe the transit of the Princess herself.

"There is my brother Montessor," said Lord Alfred, offering his arm to the *Durchlauchtigste*. "It is a great honour, I can tell you, her coming to see *you*, Mrs. St. Leger. She says you were civil to her at Frankfort, somewhere."

"Oh, yes!" said Mrs. St. Leger, in an affected foreign accent; "so I was. *La Diète*! there is nothing so *collet monté* as the Diet at Frankfort; and when the Princess of Schaffenhauseu pounced upon it, (nobody knew whence, *car elle tomba des cieux*,) there was a doubt which of the princesses it was; for the Schaffenhauseus are like the Gallitzins, '*comme s'il en pleuvait*.' So there was a question how she should be received in the society of *la Diète*; and the Austrian ambassador, as president,

wrote home for instruction, before he would let her into the Palais Taxis, or give her the honours of *l'Altesse*.

“ Well, you know how slow the poor dear Aulic council moves ! and, before their answer came, the Princess was off for England, and so was I. But I took such an *engouement* for her ! She lent me one of her nice carriages all the time she stayed, and was so good-natured ! In fact, I know her to be a *grande et puissante dame*. The Prince, her late husband, was one of those rich Belgic, German, Spanish princes, you know, like the De Lignes and the D'Arembergs ; and the *on dit* goes that he left her all his wealth not entailed : — his vineyards touch dear Metternich's. ”

“ By Jove ! ” said Lord Alfred, rubbing his hands, “ that makes one's mouth water. How I should like to drink her health in her own Johannisberg, in her castle on the Rhine. Besides, she really is quite charming. ”

“ Yes, ” lisped Mrs. St. Leger, “ I knew she would *far furore* in London—she is so rich, and so odd, and dresses beyond everything ; and then so *very* clever,—she speaks five languages, and paints like a professional artist. ”

“ Still there is something *louche* about her, ” said Mr. St. Leger. “ She made a great sensation at Frankfort, visited all the hospitals, left money for the *Hospice des Aliénés*, and for *la Maison des Orphelines* ; and pottered about the town with a *Béguine*, a sort of sister of charity ; *se fourrant partout*, as the bourguemestre said—for she not only visited the prisons, but the prisoners of state who had got up the *révolution manquée* of last year, *la canaille* ! People thought that odd. ”

“ ‘ Charity covereth a multitude of sins, ’ ” said colonel Winterbottam ; “ and the Princess has a tolerable list to clothe, if report here speaks truth. ”

“ What sins ? venial or venal ? ” asked Lord Alfred.

“ German morals are not strait-laced, ” replied the Colonel.

“ As ours are, ” added Lord Allington, drily.

“ Oh ! for facility of divorce and left-hand marriages—*passe*. But when it comes to a trifle of murder,—” continued Colonel Winterbottam, shaking his head and looking through his glass.

“ You don't mean that ? ” said Lord Alfred, anxiously.

“ St. Leger might tell you, if he pleased, ” said the Colonel.

St. Leger placed his finger on his lips with a mysterious air.

“ So, you are too diplomatic? — Well, then, the story goes, that she contrived to get rid of her first husband in order to marry the second.”

“ *Bagatella!*” exclaimed Lord Allington.

“ Poignard, or prussic acid?” asked Captain Levison, drawing up his cravat.

“ She stopped his mouth with a handkerchief, after a smoking-bout,” said the Colonel.

“ She had better have stopped it with damages, as we do in moral England,” said Lord Allington.

“ But, after all,” added Captain Levison, “ there may not be a word of truth in the story, which may be all got up by radical papers and whig journals. Her suppers are so very good!”

“ And if there were truth in it,” said Lord Alfred, “ these things depend so much upon circumstance! — A fine woman energized by passion! — jealousy, for instance — Eh! Allington? your duchess at Rome and her courier, to wit!”

“ Yes, hers was meridian blood: but a cold phlegmatic German! a *vrouw* killing her overfed *graf*, and with a halter for a stiletto — Pah! there’s no poetry in that.”

“ It was not a halter,” said the Colonel; “ it was a *fichu brodé*, which led to the discovery.”

“ *Un assassinat à la petite maîtresse*,” said Mrs. St. Leger, tittering: “ but, somehow, I don’t think those things are so very much minded abroad.”

“ No matter,” said Lord Alfred. “ She is a personage — an aristocrat, and will therefore be exposed to all sorts of calumnies here; but she has had the most rapid and complete success of any foreigner since the beautiful Gallitzin, who turned our fathers’ heads some thirty years ago.”

“ *Succès de vogue*,” said Lord Allington, with whom it was notorious the Princess was no favourite. “ I have seen so many of those ‘ complete successes ’ die out before the season was over!”

“ You will find the Princess of Schaffhausen won’t wait for that,” said Mr. St. Leger. “ Before you can telegraph her arrival in one place, she is off to another; which makes it doubted by some whether she is the Princess — I mean, her Highness of”

At that moment the Princess entered the box with the Marquis Montessor. She saluted on both her creamy cheeks the little *chiffon* of diplomacy, gave the ex-minister her hand to kiss, took her seat in the front, but with her back to the scene, and placed her elbow nearly in contact with the arm of her neighbour in the adjoining box, Sir Frederick Mottram. All present were known to her, or desirous of being so; and she received their recognitions and presentations rather with German formality than foreign courtesy; but, after the first introduction, she fell into that ease and decision of manner which characterize women of the world all over the world. Her accent, when she spoke English, was foreign; her voice, clear as the tinkling of a silver bell; and her quick, restless eye, unassisted by a glass, reconnoitred with rapidity the whole side of the house which she had left.

“What a good box you have got, Madame St. Leger! I like to see you ex-excellences so well provided for.”

“We happen not to be provided for at all, thanks to our reforming ministry,” said Mr. St. Leger.

“*Mauvaise politique!*” said the Princess. “You English fight and pay better than any nation in the world; but when you come to diplomatize, you are, *ma foi! de franches ganaches!* In your England, you spend all in what you call secret service; but an opera-box is worth all the police *espionnage* in the world.”

“Explain us that, *belle Princesse,*” said Lord Allington, sneeringly.

“*Ah, mon Dieu!* I explain nothing, I understand nothing; but *mon esprit observateur* has long discovered that there is

‘ Quelques rapports secrets
Entre le corps diplomatique
Et celui des ballets.’

N'est-ce pas, Milord Montessor? ”

Every one laughed at the reference: Lord Montessor looked pleased at the allusion.

“The Princess is quite right,” he said. “An ambassador may do more business in his opera-box than in his cabinet. A conversation symphonized by the notes of Meyerbeer is worth all the official notes in the world.”

“ It was found so at Milan, in 1820,” observed the Princess, “ where words dropped in a box at the Scala led to the dungeons of Spielsberg. Only make people talk, no matter about what, the dominant idea will come out. The old *finoteries du Conclave*,—the *language being given to conceal thought*—the *volto sciolto*, *pensieri stretti*, and other old political axioms, are worth nothing now. *Une causerie de sofa vaut bien la question ordinaire et extraordinaire*; and an opera-box is the best of all secular confessionals—for those who know how to use it.”

“ The true secret tribunal!—eh, Princess?” said the Ex-envoy.—“ Have many of the foreign ministers boxes this season, Colonel?”

“ All, I believe, except perhaps him of Belgium.”

“ And why ‘perhaps’?”

“ Because I suspect the whole salary allowed him by the revolutionary government of *les braves Belges* would scarce pay for a box on the third tier.”

The Princess shrugged her shoulders, and observed, “ But what would you have of a *gouvernement de circonstance*?”

“ Or rather *d’occasion*,” said Lord Allington: “ for the four days at Brussels were but the three days of Paris at second-hand.”

“ Yes, the brand came lighted from France,” said Lord Alfred.

“ But the train was well laid to receive it in Belgium,” said the Princess. “ Ah! those hard-headed Flemings! You don’t know them.”

“ No matter,” said Mr. St. Leger, “ the thing won’t work—can’t go on at all.”

“ The miracle is that it has gone on so long,” said the Princess: “ three years *bien sonnés! je n’en reviens pas*.”

“ Nor I,” said Mr. St. Leger. “ Do you know anything of the new people, Princess?”

“ Do you?” asked the Princess, significantly.

“ How should I!” he replied, contemptuously.

“ *Eh, comment*,” said the Princess, with a supercilious curl upon her lip—“ *comment voulez-vous que je les connaisse?* A government of lawyers, professors, doctors of law, and, for aught I know, of medicine—*au moins, des Doctrinaires*.”

There was a general smile at the warmth of this explosion.

“ And yet, Princess,” said Lord Allington, “ these lawyers,

professors, and doctors have made head against the most consummate statesmen in Europe. They have taken their stand with the Talleyrands, the Metternichs, the Falcks, the Palmerstons, and the Bulows."

"*Incroyable!*" said the Princess; "these creatures of yesterday, just dug up, with all the fresh clay about them, to compete with such men was out of all ordinary calculation."

"I remember," said Mr. St. Leger, "when I was in the Foreign Office in 1830, the Protocol No. 1. was despatched to the first provisional government, by Cartwright and Bresson. We thought the whole farce would have been over before our *chargés* could arrive at Brussels, or that the *roturier* cabinet would have taken an age to learn the rudiments of their art. Not at all. In the *rapport* which came back immediately, it was said that '*La réponse ne se fit pas attendre*;' and Tielemans met our men with an *aplomb* that was inconceivable."

"What is the secret, Princess," said Lord Allington, "that men so new should have proved themselves so equal to cabinets so old?"

"Because they *are* new," said the Princess with a smile difficult to interpret.

"The thing won't hold another year," said Mr. St. Leger, dogmatically.

"It ought not to hold," said the Princess; "for, by its new code, no woman can reign."

"That is nothing to the purpose," said Lord Allington; "women always reign—by influence, if not by right. Every cabinet in Europe," he added, fixing his eyes on the Princess till she lowered hers beneath his glance, "has an *ambassadrice de poche*, though some are not so openly avowed as others."

"Women are good missionaries," said the Princess, "and worthy to preach *la religion des rois*."

"They are the best of adventurers, because the boldest," said Lord Allington, pointedly; "and they always succeed in—"

.... "blinding *le trop clair-voyant*," interrupted the Princess, carelessly.

"Not always," said Lord Allington.

"Who is the Belgian minister here?" asked Mrs. St. Leger.

“Don't know at all,” said the little Ex-envoy.

“Haven't the least idea,” said the hereditary legislator, Lord Montessor.

“A very able and *spirituel* person,” said Lord Allington.

“Do you remember the Prince's *mot* last year, when a change was expected?” asked Colonel Winterbottam, eagerly.

“Let's have it,” said the Guardsman. “He is such a famous old fellow!”

“Why, some quidnunc at the Travellers' asked him whether Monsieur Van B—— or Monsieur Van C—— were the person expected from Brussels. ‘I hope it is Monsieur Van C——,’ he said, ‘*car je ne le connais pas.*’”

“*Impayable !*” said the Princess. “That prince was a great man for *his* day, but not for ours. *Écoutez, messieurs !* you must not put new wine into old bottles.—But, Milord Montessor, whose is that great box you occupied to-night? I should like to have it next season, if I should be here.”

“Impossible, Princess! It is reserved in perpetuity for the select—the *élite*.”

“What do you call the *élite*?”

“In the present instance, it means some certain men, of a certain party, patrons of the Opera; but, generally, the term is applicable to the exclusives of London society, the flower of the aristocracy, or privileged classes. For instance....”

“Privilege! why, all who have money are privileged here, *n'est-ce pas?*”

“It should seem so,” said Lord Allington, in a low tone, not caught by the insolent foreigner.

“Is that Sare *Chose*—my friend Lady Frances's husband, of the privileged class? for I saw him in the box pointing his glass at us. I thought he had been *roturier*.”

“And so he is,” replied the Marquis, “if, by Sir *Chose*, you mean Sir Frederick Mottram; and, as such, he is not exactly entitled to a place in our Omnibus; but he is allied to two noble families by marriage.”

“*Ah, c'est vrai!* he is brother-in-law to *ce pauvre* Lord John, who has *bolted*, what you call—like that *escroc* Pomenars, *qui ne voulait pas se laisser pendre*. He is a duke's brother, I think.”

“He is mine,” said Lord Montessor, coolly; while the *naïvete*, or the ignorance, of the Princess caused a general titter.

“Poor John,” said Lord Alfred, “has been hardly used by the newspapers! That little adventure or misadventure of his at Newmarket is a thing of frequent occurrence in the sporting world,—of royal precedent, in fact—only he happens to have been a little pushed for payment, before he had time to look about him.”

“Well,” said the Princess, “he has both time and space now; for I see by the papers that he is at Brussels. That city is the *maison de refuge de vous autres Anglais*,—of the *élite*—*entendez-vous?*”

“Not now,” said Mr. St. Leger. “No English of respectability will stay at Brussels till the House of Nassau return.”

“And if that doesn’t soon occur, the Belgian commerce will be ruined—there will at least be an end of Antwerp,” said Lord Montessor.

“Your ministers do not seem to know their own mind,” said the Princess: “the truth, indeed, is, that, all things considered, Belgium has the best of the bargain in this delay. But Lord Palmerston should remember that, in the mean while, the poor English have nowhere to hide their heads; and at the rate you are going on, *ma foi*, you will all want refuge somewhere, —at least you *élite*, who must soon work for your *pain quotidien, tout comme les autres*——”

“What can you do for your bread, Colonel?” said Mrs. St. Leger.

“My Lord Aubrey says I make punch excellently.”

“And play it too,” said Lord Allington, in an under tone.

“I shall set up a coffee-house,” said Lord Montessor; “and I’ll take you, Allington, for my waiter.”

“Why not *maître du ballet, milord?*” said the Princess: “*on a toujours du goût pour son premier métier.*”

“I might do worse,” replied the peer, conceitedly: “and so, Allington, you must be content to be my call-boy.”

“Thank you,” said Lord Allington, leaning his chin on his cane; “but I have taken my vocation already. I have a famous crossing in my eye; I won’t tell where, though—some of you will take it else.”

“From Crocky’s to Jermyn-street?” asked the Guardsman eagerly.

"No, no," said the Princess; "you must not *escamoter* his gutter; there will always be dirty work enough for you all."

"What shall we make of——there?" said Mrs. St. Leger, pointing with her glass to an ex-official in the pit, who had been instrumental in getting her husband his appointment.

"A climbing-boy; and let his motto be 'High and dirty,'" said the Princess.

"Princess!" said Lord Allington, evidently displeased with the sarcastic foreigner, "I often wonder how it is, that, being as you are but two months in London, you know everything about every one."

"*Médiocre et rampant*," said the Princess, making at the same time a sign to Lady Frances, who was in close colloquy with her little cousin in the opposite box—" *Médiocre et rampant, et l'on arrive à tout.*"

"You," said Lord Allington, pointedly, "are notoriously neither one nor the other."

"Well, then, I am rich and insolent," she added carelessly—" *Il y a tant de moyens pour parvenir.*"

"There is something in that," said Lord Allington.

"Pray," said the Colonel, as he followed the direction of the Princess's eyes, "what does the great commoner think of that little cousin always fluttering about his wife?"

"*Ma foi*," said the Princess, "it is an affair of life and death. Miladi Frances must either die of *ennui*, or dissipate it with *le petit page que voilà.*"

"You may see him with her in the Park as regularly as her poodle," said Colonel Winterbottam.

"Yes, they always remind one of Rubens's great picture of Lady Arundel," said Lord Allington, "catalogued 'Lady, dwarf, and dog.'"

"*Que voulez-vous? elle meurt d'ennui*," added the Princess, yawning. "It is a case of felony; her husband ought to be tried for his life. Ah! you laugh, but a *mari grognard* is worse than a tertian ague."

"Worse indeed," said Lord Allington, "for it is a quotidian. Only think of uxoricide being brought home to the most moral man in England, and a coroner's inquest sitting on the beautiful body of

Lady Frances Mottram, and bringing in a verdict of—‘Died by the visitation of her husband’s ill-humour.’ ”

“ Well,” said Colonel Winterbottam, “ I thought the great commoner too much occupied with the affairs of the nation, to find leisure for minding his own.”

“ A man has always time to *ennuyer* his wife,” said the Princess.

“ And a wife has not always the means of getting rid of a husband,” said Lord Allington—“ at least, in *this* country.”

Every one remained silent, stunned by the hardihood of the remark. The Princess, however, did not acknowledge the epigram, and was occupied in attending to the ballet, and applauding Taglioni, with exclamations evidently of rapturous admiration.

“ What studies,” she said, “ for painting and poetry! Greek sculpture wanted these subjects of grace in movement.”

“ Yes,” said Lord Allington, “ movement, in all its power, is a modern discovery.”

“ Not altogether,” said the Princess; “ it is a modern discovery for the mass, but was always known to the few. When things come to be executed, ‘ no secrecy comparable to celerity,’ says one of your few philosophical statesmen : the ‘ celerity ’ of Bacon, in the sixteenth century, was the movement of the nineteenth.”

“ Talking of statesmen,” said Colonel Winterbottam, who always kept up a running fire of words upon system (the conversation Sharp of his own world of gossiping)—“ Talking of great statesmen, I do assure you there are very odd reports afloat about Mottram : some think all is not right in the upper story—Lord Aubrey says, that all half-and-half-men must be half mad ! ”

“ It appears that Aubrey keeps all his bright things for you,” said Lord Allington.

“ Be that as it may,” continued the Colonel, “ there are really all sorts of reports abroad. Some say, Mottram is going to join the Whigs—and his speech the other night looks like it; others, that he is disgusted with all parties, and intends to retire from public life, and write the history of his own times;—you know he has a taste for literature, and the arts, and all that kind of thing. But all agree that, in spite of his coal-mines and his steam-engines, he is cleared out. Some say, Mottram Hall must come to the hammer; others, that the new house on Carlton-terrace is to be let for three

years ; and that the family goes to the Continent, to join the forlorn-hope at Rome and Naples, and try to pull up. ”

“ That comes of men frittering away their fortunes, ” said Lord Allington, “ in paying their tradesmen’s bills. ”

At that moment there was heard a rustling in the adjoining box, and the door clapped with violence. The Princess now arose, and threw round a glance at the splendid circle. Beauty and brilliancy, sounds to intoxicate, and sights to dazzle, combined and concentrated all that nature and art, wealth and taste, can produce as the last result of refined civilization. The scene was the fairy forest of the ‘ Sylphide ; ’ the moment, when the whole *corps de ballet*, the attendant nymphs, rush down the stage, in the flush of youth, grace, and movement, realizing so much poetry by means so mechanical.

What a scene of enchantment to the spectator ! What an arena of labour, pain, privation, and effort to the actor ! What an infinity of social evil, unseen, unthought of, forms the basis of the overgrown wealth necessary to purchase such a combination—a combination too, of which a few, even among the favoured children of chance and fortune, can really appreciate the unquestioned excellence. And is this all that money can bestow, or the magic of art produce for the gratification of sense ? Alas for humanity ! in all aspects little ; in none so little as in that of its pleasures !

While thoughts passed, or, from the expression of her countenance, might be supposed to pass, through the Princess’s mind, a tiny repeater, set in her bracelet, struck twelve ; and the curtain fell, with the wings of the Sylphide.—Everybody started up.

“ Are you orthodox, you English ? ” she said, the expression of her face again changing to a look of sarcastic pleasantry, as she observed the audience thinning rapidly. “ But it seems your orthodoxy does not meddle with your suppers after the Opera. Will you all therefore come to my *media-noche*, in St. James’s Square ? ”

“ It would be heterodox indeed, ” said Lord Alfred, “ to refuse that : one of the good results of shortening the Opera on Saturdays, is the revival of suppers. ”

Lord Allington now secured the arm of Mrs. St. Leger, who drew back to give precedence to the Princess. Madame Schaffenhause took that of Lord Montessor ; and flanked by Lord Alfred,

and pioneered by Colonel Winterbottam, they advanced through the dense and brilliant crowd to the Round-room. Captain Levison, who led the van, gave the order for the Princess's carriage by her high-sounding title, and fixed the attention of the multitude upon her distinguished person.

"The Princess of Schaffenhauseu's carriage!" roared out the attendant at the head of the stairs. There was a rush and a press.

"Is she a raal princess, Lady Dogherty?" asked a strange voice, proceeding from a strange group which followed close in the Princess's wake.

The question was overheard by Madame Schaffenhauseu. "*Dans ce mot-là je reconnais mon sang,*" she quoted laughingly, "for I have some drops of Irish blood in my veins!"

"Yes," said Lord Allington, "the siege of Limerick did the state of Austria some service; and Dick Talbot's reply to Louis XIV. might bear a pretty general application." *

At that moment the Princess was fixed to the spot by the pressure of a foot treading on the end of her mantilla. She looked round with something more than curiosity. The sceptical inquirer as to the authenticity of her rank bowed low: he was to all appearance a distressed gentleman, or at least a gentleman in distress, to the uttermost infliction of heat, weariness, and a false position.

For the last ten minutes he had been dragged, pinched, nudged, and forced forward by two fair companions, in spite of a bulk of person ill suited to thread the mazes of the Round-room. Sometimes yielding, sometimes resisting the impetus of their movements, he vainly exclaimed, "Aisy now, Lady Dixon, dear! the more haste the worse speed. Let go my arrum, Lady Dogherty, honey! till I get at my hankercher; musha! but it's horrid hot; I'm choking alive with the drowth."

The Lady Dixon thus apostrophized on his right, was long, lean, and loaded with the mourning drapery of widowhood. The Lady Dogherty thus solicited on his left, was stout, broad, and protuberant; in dress, an illustration of Shakspeare's 'sun in flame-coloured

* Louis XIV. observing the Duke of Tyrconnel to resemble himself, remarked conceitedly, "*Madame votre mère a été à notre cour, Monsieur le Duc?*" "Non, Sire," he replied; "*mais mon père y a été.*"

taffeta'; and in undress, an outrage on the minor morals of the decent strait-laced toilet of the revived Gothic mode.

Her release of the Princess's mantilla was followed by an emphatic apology, which was listened to with an intensity of stare so protracted as to verge on the very confines of ill-breeding or ridicule; until the supercilious foreigner, hurried on by Colonel Winterbottam, relaxed her gaze, and left the eloquent apologist in the midst of her unfinished sentence.

"What originals!" said Lord Montessor, laughing.

"*Quelles horreurs!*" said Mrs. St. Leger.

"What very odd people come to the Opera since the Reform Bill passed!" observed Lord Alfred.

"Very," said Colonel Winterbottam. "But that is a well-known Irish group from Brighton. The Princess's *friend* (for it must come to *that*) was called Lady Toe Dogherty, and gets on in society by treading upon people's feet, and by calling the next day to make her apologies, and to obtain perhaps a bowing acquaintance by the same movement. Her intrigues to get to the Pavilion were very amusing."

"Winterbottam, you know everybody and everything: 'tis a privilege to be piloted by you," said Lord Montessor, sneeringly.

"*L'éclaireur du beau monde*," said the Princess, laughing, but still looking back at the Doghertys with renewed curiosity.

"Oh! but that woman is no joke," said the Colonel: "she puts me in a fever; I thought I had left her *plantée* at Brighton, and here she is."

"The Princess of Schaffenhhausen's carriage stops the way," was now re-echoed from below; and every head turned round at the announcement. The Princess passed on, and every eye followed her transit. Brighter forms and younger beauties squeezed and glided past unheeded; but the Princess was the queen of the season; and the eye of fashion followed her meteor course with the same ardour of interest as that with which science gazes on the uncalculated movements of some newly-discovered planet.

The sudden and brilliant appearance of the Princess of Schaffenhhausen in the high circles of London, in the very heart of a season, in which social pleasure and political party had assumed an intensity and a development hitherto unknown in the domestic history of the

country, had excited a considerable sensation in all its coteries, and a considerable interest in its highest and most exclusive *cliques*. At the moment of her arrival, a memorable revolution had been effected, which, in changing the character of the government, had overthrown the routine systems of the “old political post-horses;” and by rendering their customary agencies inapplicable, had thrown parties upon a course of experiments and expedients in search of new *points d'appui*, for the conservation of aristocratic power, and for successfully resisting the encroachments of popular claims.

Among these, the subtilty and finesse of female agency, and its corrupting influence at once over the passions and the mind, had been largely called on; and the system which marked the decline of absolute monarchy in France, and hastened the ruin of the restored dynasty of the Stuarts in England, was again revived, to avert the downfall of a discomfited oligarchy. Different as were the states of society, and the objects to which intrigue was directed, still a parallel might be drawn between the cabinets of Versailles and of Whitehall, and the political coteries of present times; in each of which, pleasure and intrigue, frolic and faction, were so intimately blended as to blind the most observing, and serve the purposes of the most wily.

The threatened loss of one eminent *femme d'état*, which had been considered as a political calamity by the party for whom she laboured, seemed to be anticipated and indemnified by the arrival of another; and though the Princess of Schaffhausen had not yet presented her *note verbale*, nor made communication of any *protocole de conférence*—though she had delivered no credentials as one of the many plenipotentiaries *de quenouille* from the five great powers—still the idea gained ground that she was destined to succeed to the vacated appointment, and awaited her own good time for announcing her mission.

Younger, handsomer, more original, and, above all, more awakened to the changes impressed upon European society, she threw her dull but zealous colleagues into shade. She took the tone of the times with an open boldness unknown to her astute predecessor; and gave out lights that bewildered the councils of the set, who sometimes doubted whether she was in jest or earnest, or whether the priestess of absolute power was not the agent of ultra-liberalism.

She laughed at the old method of ciphers and insinuation, of tak-

ing thought by surprise, and mystifying the plainest transactions—the threadbare usages of the worn-out cabinets of Europe! She spoke out that which others only whispered, and, keeping no terms with innovation, sometimes rendered her *outrées* doctrines fearful even to those most inclined to propagate and to practise them. Her *mots* had already passed into maxims, her aphorisms into proverbs; and though some were startled by her declarations, that “*la meilleure diplomatie est d’aller droit son chemin*,” and that “*l’homme le plus franc est le plus fin*,” still she was adopted by the high party, as the child and champion of ultra-legitimacy; while the *prestige* of her fashion rendered her suspected mission palatable even to the moderate.

The supposed disciple of the school of Metternich was the more readily forgiven for the sake of her cook, who was of the school of Carême. Dinners of the most exquisite science on Mondays; suppers on Saturdays after the Opera, like those of Louis XIV. after his *jours maigres*, from which she named them; and fantastic *bals costumés*, which she whimsically called her *Kermess*, (after the Dutch Ramadan of that name,) confirmed her vogue beyond the influence of rumour to shake it.

The Princess, too, if not a woman of genius, was of great and versatile talent,—a fine musician, an able linguist, and an artist of sufficient eminence to turn an accomplishment into a profession, should the rapid changes of the times, and the loss of her Belgian estates, ever drive her upon living by the exertion of her own high endowments. In a word, she was one to take the world unawares; and she had already made herself mistress of the season’s vogue, before its patrons were conscious of her attack. The candidates for ton at any price, had canvassed her suffrage, and submitted to any humiliation to be enrolled among her guests. Her political admirers pinned their faith on her letters of presentation from foreign ministers (chiefly German), written in the usual style, in which more was insinuated than expressed; and report had assigned her a position, before caution had instituted an inquiry, or prudence suggested a doubt as to her claims.

Wealth, which in England purchases the smile of insolent rank for coarse vulgarity, and places royalty itself at the table of the ambitious plebeian—wealth, judiciously distributed, had procured

golden opinions for the patroness of arts, the contributor to public charities, and the hospitable Amphitryon of the most scientific table in London; and the swords of half the younger brotherhood of the English aristocracy were ready "to start from their scabbards," to defend the eccentricities of one who was possessed of the means of converting their high-born pauperism into princely independence.

It was rumoured that she had written a Commentary on Faust, a perfect system of metaphysical transcendentals and of religious mysticism. An earl assiduously courted her for the honour of translating it; a duchess canvassed the privilege of illustrating its pages; and a countess looked forward to a literary reputation, to be founded on her gracious permission to undertake the functions of her English editor; while many of the fashionable party and publishers of the day laid their power of puffing and parade of criticism at her feet; solicited her portrait for their "books of beauty," and "magazines of ton;" announced her "contributions" to their rival albums and annuals with self-gratulations, and asserted the supremacy of her talents and her revenues over those of all other female writers of the age.

Still the Princess, with all her accessories, was rather a meteor than a fixed star; more dazzling than appreciated, more imagined than understood. What she appeared was known even to the editors of newspapers, and to the reporters for second-rate fashionable journals; what she really might be, had hardly yet been questioned by her most intimate associates.

From her first arrival in England, the Princess had formed part of a coterie, of which Lady Frances Mottram was a distinguished member. A sudden and very German friendship had been struck up between these two persons; the last, by their respective characters, to be suspected of assimilation. The incongruity was too startling not to be assigned by the world to some *arrière-pensée* of the clever, meddling foreigner; and the motive attributed was the bringing back Sir Frederick Mottram to a fold, from which his enemies and his friends equally supposed him to be straying.

Sir Frederick was well worth preserving. The arduous statesman and brilliant senator was gifted with talents which made him an object of consideration with all parties. He, however, whom Pitt had admired in his boyhood, and Canning praised while he was

yet winning prizes in the schools of Oxford, was still wanting in that fixity of principle, that political *aplomb*, which, though often the result of an opacity of mind placing it beyond the reach of change, or a hardness of feeling inaccessible to the beauty of moral truth, is still indispensable to political consideration.

Sir Frederick Mottram's intellects were of too high an order to resist altogether the influence of new lights, and to push perseverance into obstinacy in error. But the great master-mover of mind, volition, was wanting; and placed by circumstances in the training of a particular party, he oscillated between temperament and opinion. The disciple of conservatism voted for Catholic emancipation; and was accused of giving a blow to the constitution, even while he advocated its inviolability.

Sir Frederick Mottram was also a nervous and sensitive man, at once shy and impassioned. There were peculiarities in his position, which tended to render him the victim of a look, the martyr of a sneer; and when the gossiping of the Carlton Club had bruited the imputed designs of the Princess in his behalf, his pride and principles alike took the alarm. Even before he had seen her, he had learned to hate, with all the energy of wounded and implacable self-love, this fashionable and diplomatic sibyl; and her sudden intimacy with his wife was therefore at once suspicious and distasteful to him; although it by no means followed that this intimacy could directly influence himself.

The life he had led with Lady Frances during six months of the year, seldom permitted their association. Lady Frances lived with a coterie of ultra-fashion and ultra-politics: Sir Frederick lived in parliament and in the clubs: and those whom God had joined, and no man was to put asunder, seldom met, except by particular appointment; and never from any desire to meet more frequently than the exigencies of society absolutely required. Their *mariage de convenance*, the barter of rank for wealth, had in twelve years' union produced no reciprocal feelings. Her *morgue* and insensibility, and his passionate sensitiveness and imaginative tastes, rendered compatibility impossible; and never coming together but to disagree, nor parting but in dispute, she had possibly sought the Princess's acquaintance purposely to annoy him.

On the evening already noted, a singular chance had placed the

Princess almost in personal contact with Sir Frederick Mottram, by the contiguity of the boxes they respectively occupied, during the performance of the 'Sylphide'; and the sarcasms levelled by the foreign aristocrat against the birth and principles of the English *parvenu*, confirmed an aversion which hitherto had been more a prejudice, than a sentiment sanctioned by reflection and avowed by reason.

CHAPTER II.

CARLTON-TERRACE.

A SULTRY summer's day, which had called forth the brilliant butterflies of fashion to swarm over the glittering waters of the Thames, had been followed by a heavy breathless evening, which had not prevented the same showy insects from swarming to the heated circles of the Opera-house. A deluge of rain, the usual concomitant of this state of the London atmosphere, had commenced towards the close of the performance, and incommoded the beau monde at their departure, by falling between the carriages "and their nobility;" while it detained the more plebeian portion of the audience under the arcades, in long and patient observance of the large, frequent, and pattering drops. The deep rolling thunder, mingling with the shrill calls of link-boys, for numbered vehicles, and "coach to the city!" outroared the more aristocratic demands for carriages decorated with half the ancient names of English history, and wholly overpowered the distant responses of drenched lackies and sulky coachmen.

"Lady Frances Mottram's carriage stops the way!" had been several times repeated in impatient and remonstrating vociferation, before a faded dowager of rank had descended the stairs, supported by a muffled member of an old regime of fashion, which had once made such duties imperative. She was followed by Lady Frances Mottram, who dashed forward upon the arm of an elegant boy

(her *vis-à-vis* in the box). A “by-by” and an “*a rivederla*” hastily exchanged, the young cavalier returned to the Round-room; and the footman gave the word to “Lady Di Campbell’s, Berkeley-square.”

As the carriage drove off, a person capped and cloaked beyond the reach of recognition, burst through the crowd, and rushing over the gutters, and dodging through the maze of hurrying carriages (in utter neglect of *bas-à-jour*, and shoes almost as thin), strided along Pall-Mall, and rang at the fashionably unknocked door of one of the most magnificent mansions of Carlton-terrace.

The architectural vestibule of the patrician edifice, though wrapt in silence, was brilliantly illuminated. The master, Sir Frederick Mottram, passed rapidly through it, to a room equally silent, which was lighted by a Grecian lamp of purest alabaster, suspended from its gilt and sculptured ceiling. A pair of dim wax-candles had evidently shed their “pale and ineffectual lights” for some time over a marble table covered with piles of parliamentary papers, books and manuscripts—the lumber of public business and of private study.

This room was the working cabinet of the legislator; the sole domestic retreat of the private man; the *sanctum* of the man of letters and of art. Books, busts, pictures, the relics of the two great epochs of human history (the antique and middle ages), were here collected in unsparing profusion; and, with the more serviceable details of luxury and magnificence dedicated to the ease and comfort of the body, presented to the imagination a strange contrast with the homely-wainscoted parlour, in which Swift sought the Premier of the Augustan age of England, and (as he wrote to Stella) hung up his hat on a peg in the wall on entering: the contrast between the minds of the men was still more striking.

The perturbation of spirit and petulance of step of the lord of this beautiful apartment, as he entered, were strangely at odds with the tranquil genius of the spot. He flung his drenched cloak on a divan of purple velvet worthy of a Turkish seraglio; and his cap on a bronze tripod that might have stood in the villa of Cicero. He slipped his feet into silken slippers worked in the looms of Persia; and flinging himself into an arm-chair devised by luxury and executed by taste, he opened a book, which he had marked on the night before, for some interest in its pages, and some desire to return to them.

But he brought no mind to its perusal ; no power of attention to its subject. Laying down again the volume, he listened as if in impatient expectation ; all however was silent, and he again resumed his reading. The buhl *pendule* on the chimney-piece struck one, chiming forth the quaint old air of “ *Charmante Gabrielle*,” the melody of times when men made love to psalm-tunes. Sir Frederick cast a glance at the time-piece, and flinging down for a second time the book, walked to the window of the veranda, which opened on the park.

The rain had called forth the thousand odours of the exotics which filled it. The refreshed but genial air acting on his fevered brow like the soft warmth of a tepid bath on the wearied limbs of the traveller, he stepped forth and threw his arms over the balustrade upon the terrace. It occupied the precise site where the Duchess of Cleveland had flirted from her balcony with Charles the Second, while De Grammont and St. Evremond paired off, as men who knew the world—the one to feed his subjects in the ponds, the other to read his last Madrigal to Mademoiselle Temple. The moon, shining forth on the retreat of the heavy and massive clouds which had obscured the night, illuminated the towers of Westminster Abbey, the architectural miracles of the fifteenth century, as they rose over the dense masses of foliage which mimicked the broad outline of forest scenery. In front, and partially seen through the trees, the broken waters of the rippling lake reflected the moonbeams in a thousand scattered and sparkling rays. The whole was an illusion, recalling distant times and distant regions ; but what an illusion ! in the heart of a great city, and at that hour and season,—the carnival of English fashion, the vigil of English pleasures and dissipation !

The scene was one to have charmed the coldest imagination ; but it now failed to touch the warmest. Sir Frederick dragged forward the curtains with an impetuous hand, and shut it out, as he uttered an audible expression of disgust. There is a certain irritability of feeling, a disease of humour, that renders the calm of nature and the tranquillity of externals a personal insult.

He again took up his book — read — strided across his room — listened, — but heard only the distant roll of carriages, and the ticking of the pendule. *Le bon Roi Dagobert* chimed the second

hour after midnight ; and he now sat down to his writing-desk, and threw off the following hot-proof impression of his agitated mind :—

“ TO THE LADY FRANCES MOTTRAM.

“ Two o'clock A. M.

“ You left me at the Opera this evening under the impression that, after you had set down your aunt in Berkeley-square, you were to return immediately to your own house, — observe, for the first time, for many weeks, before daylight. Your promise was an evasion ; and you have added deception to disobedience. I take it for granted you counted on my indifference to your movements, founded on your own carelessness to my feelings and wishes ; but that indifference must stop short of dishonour. You are now sharing in the orgies of a woman who has been characterized in her political career, as an “ *Intrigante par goût, par métier, et par besoin ;* ” and who is as notorious for her vices, as distinguished by the misuse of talents, which render her a female Mephistopheles.

“ But why should I write this to you ? In a word, and to the point ; (for I am too ill and too weary to wait up any longer ; and I set off by appointment at seven, to my poor sister Lady John’s cottage, and shall not return till Monday :) I command you to break off this absurd and disgraceful alliance without further equivocation or delay. I know the Princess dines here to-day ; for I see her name, accompanied by others whom I despise and detest, on the list left on my table by Wilson. I will not outrage the usages, nor even the abuses of hospitality, by forcing you to put her off ; but, remember, she enters my house for the last time, or I never enter it again as long as you remain its mistress.

“ FREDERICK MOTTRAM.”

“ P.-S. I insist on Emilius being sent back early to-morrow morning to Dr. Morrison’s. The injury done to that unfortunate boy by bringing him home is incalculable, both to his mind and to his health. He shall not be the victim of an indulgence which has more of folly in it than of fondness. I shall write to Dr. M. to forbid his

sending him here any more without my express and written permission.

“ Once more, with respect to this Madame Schaffenhause, I am utterly free from all personal prejudice; for I have never met her; and should scarcely know her, were it not for the affectation of her dress and gesture : but that suffices. “ F. M.”

The writing of this angry and indignant letter removed a weight of bitter and choking sensation : but it alluded only to one among many causes of deep-seated irritation; and he folded, directed, and sealed it, with the same petulance with which it was written. He then rang the bell to send it to his wife's dressing-room, but rang in vain. He rang a second time with increasing violence; and no one answered. The third time, the silken rope remained in his hand. The door then opened; and he was on the point of bursting forth in a fit of angry inquiry, when the figure that appeared in the opening checked his utterance, and gave a change to the whole course of his humour.

In all the range of possibilities, no form less appropriate could have presented itself, at such an hour, in such a place, and to such a person. It was that of a man tall and gaunt, ragged and grotesque in his dress. A purple jacket, once splendid, (the Mottram livery,) was dragged upon shoulders of such disproportionate dimensions, that the tight and torn sleeves terminated but a little below the elbow. The nether-dress, of buckskin, left a space between the old Wellington boot and the brawny knee, which a worsted stocking scarcely covered. A black stock, dandily put on, gave a military cast to a broad, florid face, as expressive of self-conceit as a passing emotion of timidity would allow. A rough, shock head was drawn up to serve as an attempt at an attitude; and while one hand held firmly by the lock of the door, the other less firmly grasped a postilion's cap, which presently fell with weight upon the floor, and lay without an attempt being made to pick it up. A deprecating smile played upon the uncouth, laughable face; and the whole man stood an epitome of self-possession, dashed with an agitating desire to produce an effect, which, to one acquainted with the true physiognomic indications of the unadulterated Milesian race, would have led at once to the conviction that the personage was an Irishman.

After the stare, the silence, and the amazement of a fully elapsed minute, Sir Frederick, in a sharp and startling voice, asked—

“Who are you, pray?”

He was answered in a subdued brogue, and Anglo-Irish mincing tone—

“Is it me, plaze your honor? It’s what I bees, the boy about the pleece, Sir Frederick—of coorse, sir—”

“What place?”

“The coort-yard, Sir Frederick; that is, the steebles, and your honor’s offices. You know yourself, sir.”

“Oh! a helper in the stables?”

“Not at all, axing your honor’s pardon,” he replied conceitedly, and drawing up his stock; “but does a turn by way of interteenment, till I gets into pleece, and to oblige your honor; and hopes you’re well, Sir Frederick—long life to you, and to Colonel Vere, and the Couldstrames!”

“What brings you here?” said Sir Frederick, with some amazement and a little suspicion.

“What brings me here, plaze your honor? Why, what but to obligate Mr. Watkins, the porther, and sleep in his aisy chair; and minds the dure, till it’s what he comes in, which soon he will, plaze God—of coorse, Sir Frederick—”

“Ho! the porter is out, then, and has left you in care of the house?”

“He has; and I’d do more nor that for Mr. Watkins without fee or reward, and for yourself too, Sir Frederick: can I do anything for your honor now, sir?” And he advanced with an easy and gradually disengaged air towards the divan, shaking out and folding up the cloak, which he threw over his arm; and then drew up, as if for farther orders.

“Send the house-steward to me, and lay down that cloak!”

“He is gone to bed, your honor. And in respect of the cloak——”
(laying it down.)

“Then send me the groom of the chambers,” said Sir Frederick, impatiently.

“Mr. Ellison is out at a party, with her ladyship’s lady’s-maid, Sir Frederick—but of coorse will be soon in.”

“Humph! So. Then send me the footmen,—Lady Frances’s page,—the butler,—any one.”

“ The two footmen, sir, bees out with her leedyship’s carridge ; and the butler’s at his country-house ; and th’under butler is gone with a coach for Ma’m’selle ; and Master Francis is in bed, with a could in his hid, poor little cratur ! ”

Sir Frederick thus learned that his house was abandoned by all his numerous train of servants, and actually left, at that advanced hour of the night, in the keeping of a ragged varlet, to all appearance the helper of the helper in the stables. After a minute’s silence, he nodded off the whimsical intruder, whose countenance and gesticulations, during the ill-assorted dialogue, would have amused any other than one so little within the range of amusability.

The ‘ boy about the place,’ who seemed to have fully reached his majority, after some farther fidgeting, closed the door, with a fantastical bow, and a solemn — “ I shawl, Sir Frederick — of coorse. ”

“ This is the sum-up of all, ” said the master of the deserted mansion, hastily recalling the man he had dismissed.

“ Stay ! come back. What is your name ? ”

“ Lawrence Fegan, Sir Frederick ; and I wonders, axing your honor’s pardon, but you remimbers me. ”

“ Remember you ! ”

“ Ay, in troth ! Sure I’m Larry Fegan, your ould little tiger, that was give you with the brown cab and cob by Colonel Vere, long ago, Sir Frederick, when he left the Couldstrames, and came over from Dublin, with th’ other baste. ”

“ Are you the boy that fell from behind my carriage, in the Park, and broke his arm ? ”

“ Why, then, sorrow one else, plaze your honor, but just my own self. It’s what I’ve but little use of it iver since, to this blessed time. ”

“ I ordered you to be taken care of. ”

“ Long life to your honor ! ” was the vague reply, uttered with downcast eyes, and a sigh peculiarly Irish.

“ I will see you again, ” said Sir Frederick ; “ you may go now. ”

Sir Frederick endeavoured to stifle some compunctious feelings for his own neglect of the sufferer, by apostrophizing the profligacy of his servants. “ So much for the high life below stairs of London !

Good heavens ! what disorder ! But is it wonderful, with such examples before them ? or can one be surprised if the English aristocracy should hurry forward revolution by the heartless dissipation of their time and fortunes, or undermine the very foundations of society by their wanton profligacy ? ”

He paused, sighed deeply, and then lighted his taper to go to bed : but in doing the office of his absent lamp-man, and extinguishing the lamp and candles, a glare of red light crimsoned the whole room. It was the morning sun, shining through the scarlet drapery of the windows. Sir Frederick drew the curtains for a moment aside ; then turned away, with a feeling which the most wretched might compassionate.

Having deposited his letter on his wife's toilet in her dressing-room, he was hurrying to his own apartment on the other side of the house, when he recollected that he had left his watch on the study-table. On returning, he perceived that the porter's chair was still occupied by Lawrence Fegan, who was already fast asleep. On the desk, beside him, lay a letter with a black seal. Sir Frederick took it. It was addressed to himself. The seal was sufficiently large to attract his attention, and its device caused a revulsion of his whole frame. He hurried back to his study, and read—

“ TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR F. MOTTRAM, BART.

“ The writer of these lines takes the liberty of making the following inquiries :—Has Sir F. M. any recollection of a young female having been received into the family of the late Sir Walter and Lady M., about fourteen years ago, under circumstances singular, if not romantic ? Was this person, at the expiration of a year, driven from Mottram Hall in a way not altogether creditable ? Was it afterwards understood, that being reduced to a destitute condition, she fell into sickness ; and that she was conveyed in a state of delirium to a parish workhouse, by the miserable and sordid wretches with whom she lodged, in the neighbourhood of Holborn, and that she died there ?

“ If all this statement be true, would the humanity of Sir Frederick lead him to visit that workhouse, on receipt of this letter, and perform an act of charity, which may reflect with a blessed influence

on his after life?—*videlicet*, to see that person, whose former wretchedness may have caused him some remorse; but who did not, as was supposed, then die. In her delirium, she escaped from the spot—to which, after many years of strange vicissitude, she has again been brought by misery and the fatality of circumstances.

“The writer is commissioned to express this poor woman’s desire to see Sir Frederick once more; and has yielded to the weakness of a creature, still perhaps but too devoted to earthly ties, in forwarding her request, and enclosing the accompanying packet. The subjoined order will admit Sir F., without delay, to ward C of the parish workhouse of——.”

The letter dropped from Sir Frederick’s hands, and with it the enclosure, which remained for a moment on the ground, where it had fallen; at length he took it up, opened and found within it a ring, bearing on its enamel the flower called in French “*la marguerite*,” and a motto in ancient and quaint language,

“FORTUNE INFORTUNE FORT UNE.”

It was wrapped in a paper, which contained a memorandum in these words:—

“I, Frederick Mottram, do of my free and uninfluenced will declare, that I will never marry any other woman than———, as long as she remains single, and deems me worthy of her choice.

(Copy.) “Mottram Hall, Jan. —, 18—.”

With the paper was another, thus inscribed:

“I release Frederick Mottram from his engagement—an idle form, if the feeling that dictated it continue;—an useless one, if it do not.

“M.

“——.”

The emotions produced by the perusal of these documents, acting upon a mind already shaken by strong passion, had all the wildness and confusion of insanity. A rush of recollections awakened a long-subdued compunction, exciting a struggle between pride and feeling—between all that is worst and all that is best in humanity. Sir

Frederick, however, felt what ought to be done; and he resolved on doing it. Putting up the papers, therefore, in his pocket, he resumed his shoes and cloak, took his hat and gloves, and went forth.

Larry Fegan was still sleeping in the porter's chair: neither Lady Frances nor the servants had yet returned; the lamps in the hall burned dimly before the morning's light. Sir Frederick shook the sleeper, who started from his slumber with a ludicrous attempt at self-possession.

"This letter with a black seal that I found here; did *you* receive it?"

"The letter, sir?" said Larry, roughing up his hair and winking his eyes; "of coorse, sir! What letter, plaze your honor?"

"This letter, it was on the desk. Did you take it in? when did it come? who brought it?"

"It was myself took it in, and nobody else knows a screed of it," said Fegan, with an expression of countenance inimitable in its humour, intelligence, and arch significance.

"Who brought it?" reiterated Sir Frederick, raising his voice angrily.

"Why thin, Sir Frederick, it was a faymale—a leedy in a hackney-coach."

"A lady! What sort of a lady?"

"Axing your pardon, Sir Frederick, did iver you see one of the leedies of the House of Mercy, in Baggot-street, Dublin? Well, sorrow a bit but it was just that same sort, sir—a kind of a blessed and holy woman. The like I niver saw in London, before or since; and wishes myself back in Dublin oncet more."

After a moment's pause, Sir Frederick looked around him, and, lowering his voice, asked, "Is there a possibility of getting a hackney-coach at this hour?"

"Of coorse there is—every possibility in life, your honor. A crony of mine, one Darby Doolan, from Dublin, bees keeping one up all night, in St. James's-street. I'll just run and bring Darby round in a moment to the door, sir."

He had put on his black cap, and was darting forward, when his master, laying his hand on his arm, exclaimed—

"Not here—not at this door—stop in Pall-mall, near the Travelers' Club."

The contrast between his white-gloved hand and the ragged dirty sleeve of the *locum tenens* of the porter of Mottram House, was not more strange than that of the two persons thus accidentally brought into conference, each at the extreme degree of social separation.

“Is it near the Thravellers’?—Oh! very well, sir—I see—I’ll be there and back in a jiffy.”

Fegan flew forth, and Sir Frederick, drawing his hat over his eyes, and his cloak round his shoulders, looked for a moment cautiously around; and, with an almost unconscious self-congratulation that neither his wife nor servants had yet returned, he went forth.

As he crossed the plank which formed a temporary passage from Carlton-terrace into Pall-mall, he encountered his own hall-porter, who, being too drunk to recognise his master, disputed the pass with him. He was hurrying home from a public-house near St. James’s-square, (where he had been carousing,) to resume his post before his lady’s arrival.

The carriages were still rolling from clubs, *soirées*, *thés*, opera-suppers, and gambling-houses of various descriptions, public and private; many of them filled by the orthodox and consistent voters for the permanence of tithes, and for Sir Andrew Agnew’s Bills for the due observance of the Sabbath. One among the splendid equipages bore the Mottram arms. The two sleepy footmen, in Sir Frederick’s rich livery, swung behind; and the pale, faded face of Lady Frances (white as the pearl that glistened in her fair, uncurled tresses) was visible within. A broken exclamation rose upon her husband’s lips; but he felt that, at that moment, he had no right to accuse.

He hurried on. The bottom of St. James’s-square was still choked with the carriages of the company at the Princess Schaffenhause’s. Apprehensive of being seen, and impatient for the arrival of Fegan’s coach, he continued to walk backward and forward near the Palace, until, seeing a carriage approaching half-way down St. James’s-street, he crossed to meet it. The next moment he found himself surrounded by a group of men issuing from King-street; among whom were the Marquis of Montessor, Lord Alfred, Lord Allington, Captain Levison, and two young noblemen, the husbands of two of the handsomest women in England. His *incognito* air had drawn the attention of the revellers; but they soon made him out, and found a resistless source of fun in detecting the great commoner,

the most moral man in Europe, in apparent *bonne fortune*—for in such set phrases was he saluted by each alternately, with many profligate inuendoes, and loud shouts of laughter-loving frolic.

“ Pray let me pass ! ” he exclaimed, in uncontrollable annoyance ;
“ I have been called upon to visit a dying friend. ”

“ Male or female ? ” said Lord Montessor.

“ How delighted I am, ” said Lord Alfred, “ to see some touch of humanity about the frozen man dug out of the glaciers of St. Bernard, as the Princess calls you ! ”

“ Nay, nay, we must not discourage a young beginner : let him pass, ” said the Marquis, laughing.

“ Lady Frances is still at the Princess’s, ” cried Captain Levison ;
“ so you may as well turn into Crocky’s, as you are out for a lark. ”

With a look and manner not to be mistaken, Sir Frederick shook the young Guardsman off.

“ Gentlemen, you *must* allow me to pass, ” he said ; and striding off, he left the party, to proceed up the street.

“ He is growing serious, ” said Lord Alfred ; “ and is going to early prayers. ”

“ I don’t think that, ” said Lord Allington, “ for he voted against Sir Andrew’s Sunday Bill. ”

“ A man may do that, and be very serious too ; as, for instance, ”
—said Lord Alfred, and he nodded at the Marquis.

The party laughed loudly, and turned in to finish their Saturday night, or Sunday morning, with ‘ the Fishmonger. ’

Sir Frederick had reached the top of St. James’s-street, when he was met by a hackney-coach, with Larry Fegan’s ragged elbow and important face thrust through the open window. The carriage drew up ; Fegan popped out, and, with the readiness of an accomplished footman, let down the step, closed the door, and, touching his postilion’s cap, asked,

“ Where to, Sir Frederick ? ”

“ To Holborn, ” was the reply.

Fegan looked amazed, repeated the order, sprung up behind the carriage, and, swinging his tall figure by two dirty straps, assumed an air which a royal lackey might be proud to imitate on a drawing-room day.

The coach stopped at the foot of Holborn-hill, and Larry presented himself at the carriage-side.

“ I did not want you, ” said Sir Frederick, somewhat surprised ; “ you may return. ”

Fegan looked mortified ; Sir Frederick took out his purse and gave him a sovereign, adding, “ I do not wish what has passed to-night to be talked over in my stables. ”

“ Oh ! of coorse—intirely not, ” said Fegan, archly.

Desiring the coachman to wait his return, Sir Frederick proceeded with a hurried step, and his glass to his eye, on his devious and uncertain way, through many obscure lanes and dirty allies, and occasionally directed by a loiterer,—when he happened to find one. Misery and degradation met him at every step. He paused in disgust and horror, uncertain how to proceed, and almost inclined to turn back.

“ If you want Mr. Johnson’s, you must turn to the left, ” said a suspicious-looking man, pointing towards a low house, or “ finish, ” the last resort of subaltern debauchees, and the nocturnal haunt of those profligates of both sexes who dare not encounter ‘ the garish eye of day. ’—“ Stay, sir, ” he continued, “ I’ll call a comrade ; ” and he turned into one of those frightfully splendid gin-palaces, to which philosophy assigns the ruin of the infatuated and miserable classes who support them. The blaze of light emitted from its highly ornamented gas-burners, as the opening door disclosed the scene within, triumphed over the brightness of the rising sun. The ‘ comrade ’ came forth, smoking a cigar. He was all skin and bone, rags, filth, and stench. He approached Sir Frederick with familiarity, in the supposed community of vice, saying,

“ Mr. Johnson’s house !—this way, sir, please. ”

“ No ! I want to go to the workhouse of——parish. ”

“ Oh ! very well, you are quite close to it. I’ll show you,—to the right, sir,—take care of that loose stone. You’re come to look for a ’prentice among the youngers, I suppose ? Plenty to be had there, warranted sound, wind and limb. ”

He pointed to a placard over the gates in the centre of a high wall, on which was written, “ Strong, healthy boys and girls, with the usual fee. Apply within. ”

“ You’ll be paid for taking them, you see, ” hiccuped the wretched creature.

Sir Frederick pulled violently the bell; the gate opened, and he passed in. The cicerone receiving triple what he expected for his brief services, winked, as he withdrew, at the sulky porter—sulky from being called from his lair at so early an hour. Sir Frederick followed across the yard. A few wretched children, a fragment of the hundred and fifty thousand houseless orphans who prowl about the streets of London, to beg or steal, were already assembled. Vice lowered on their young brows, and want sat on their ghastly cheeks. An idiot woman seized his arm.

“You shan’t beat me!” she said with a loud laugh; and, jerking him from her with violence, she reeled and fell.

“Never mind her, sir,” said the porter, who had taken the order of admittance, and was reading it. “Never mind her; she will recover of herself.”

Sir Frederick sickened. He raised the maniac from the ground, and placing her on a seat, followed his conductor into the house. At the entrance stood a plain dark chariot, apparently that of a physician. Its appearance was a relief to the unnerved, unmanned visitor.

“The hospital ward, letter C,” muttered the man, as he gave the order to an old nurse whom he met at the door.

“Oh! the gentleman as was to see the poor governess, mayhap. It’s all over with her now! Howsomdever, this way, sir.”

They proceeded along a dark passage, which admitted them into a long narrow room, dimly lighted by a few dusky windows on one side. A fire-place at either end was surrounded by a few withered old women engaged in some culinary process, and pushing each other away, in the true unaccommodating selfishness of solitary misery. Each had her little tin vessel, preparing some supplemental *friandise* furnished by the charitable to eke out the insipid, if not scanty, nutriment provided by the institution. They were all marked by mutilation, infirmity, or that ‘great disease,’ old age. The narrow and uncurtained beds on either side were tenanted by the sick and the dying. One only showed a young and a blooming countenance. It was a girl of about eighteen, who had occupied that bed for twelve years, as the nurse who accompanied the visitor declared.

“She has lost the use of her limbs, sir, and having no friend on

earth to move her, she remains constantly bedridden; and has seen many a neighbour conveyed to her last home, poor thing! There, sir, is the bed you inquire for, No. 14."

She then hurried off to obey the pressing call of some impatient patient at the farther end of the room. The bed No. 14 was covered from head to foot with a clean white sheet, on which shone a ray of sun-light from the opposite window. Under this simple covering appeared the outline of a human figure. Beside it, knelt a female in a black mantle and hood. An ejaculation of horror burst from the lips of the visiter, wholly unused to such scenes, and now so agitated and shaken. He stood for a moment at the foot of the bed, covering his face with his handkerchief, and articulated with difficulty, "I am come, then, too late!"

"Too late!" muttered emphatically the woman, rising slowly from her knees, and remaining motionless beside the bed of death. There was a silence of more than a minute.

"Is there anything to be done which may testify" The scarcely articulate voice of the speaker could not, or did not, proceed.

"Nothing," was the low but stern reply.

"Money may be deposited for"

"The parish finds a coffin," interrupted one who seemed to belong as little to this world as the inanimate remains which she hung over.

A cold shudder crept through Sir Frederick's veins at the abrupt answer. There was another pause, awkwardly protracted.

"Were you her friend?" at length inquired Sir Frederick.

"Charity and duty brought me to this asylum of misery two days back. The poor have no friends, save Heaven," she added, lowering her eyes and crossing herself. "The story of this wretched person, her sufferings, and her wrongs (for she was of a class of sufferers and used to wrongs), moved me much. They are now over in this world!" And she clasped her hands and bent her head.

"And for ever, be it hoped!" said Sir Frederick, with a burst of uncontrollable and solemn emotion.

"Her sins be forgiven her! for she loved, as she suffered, much," slowly murmured the pious woman, who was evidently one of a peculiar religious order, which, though not recognised by the laws

of England, exists there, as throughout the rest of the Christian world, doing good by stealth, and fearing, probably, as much as 'blushing to find it fame.'

The infected atmosphere, the images of misery, sickness and death, were becoming too much for the heart and the imagination of a visitant so unpractised in haunts like this. He had felt and suffered more, perhaps, in the petty space of time he had passed in this chamber of woe, than he had ever done in his life. His breathing, too, was becoming oppressed, and his strength was failing him : but, aware of his situation, he made an effort to rouse himself, and said,

"I trust, madam, you will not allow an acquaintance, begun under such affecting circumstances, to drop here. You have probably been put into the confidence of my late unfortunate friend, and——"

"Was she *your* friend?" asked the woman, in a tone of almost contempt.

"Will you allow me to call on you?" was the evasive answer. "You were, of course, the writer of the letter which"

"Yes, I wrote, and brought it, when this poor woman was at her agony."

"Will you allow me, then, an opportunity of thanking you for your humanity? Where shall I call on you?"

"I have no home! I was once like her," (pointing to the corpse,) "homeless from necessity : I am now so from choice. But *you* have a splendid and a happy home. I will call on *you*."

Sir Frederick started, unconscious alike why he had made his own proposition, or why he was disturbed by hers. "I am leaving town," he said faintly.

"I will wait your return," said the female; and she knelt down and buried her face in her hands, as if to cut short the interview.

Sir Frederick, after a short pause, retired. The old nurse, with sordid hopes and watchful eyes, accompanied him to the door. In passing by the bed of the youthful invalid, he involuntarily paused, and asked if there was anything she wished for. She replied, with a hectic flush and sparkling eye—"Tea."

He threw a sovereign on the bed, gave another to the nurse, and hurried, almost without knowing how, to the street where he had left the carriage. Larry Fegan was still there, standing with the door in one hand, and his cap in the other.

“ I desired you to go away ! ” said Sir Frederick, in a tone of displeasure.

“ Sure, your honor, would I lave you to be murdered in that thieving-place, axing your honor’s pardon ? ”

“ Shut the door, and stop in Charing-cross, ” said Sir Frederick, in a subdued voice.

He threw himself back in the carriage, and it drove on.

CHAPTER III.

THE DRESSING-ROOM.

WHOEVER would search into by-gone ages for the most undeniable evidences of what the French call “ *les mœurs*, ” will find them better preserved in material monuments than in written records. Domestic habits escape the historian; and when time, by tinting them with its own picturesque hues, commends them to the curiosity of the antiquary, their remembrance has already become vague and evanescent. But tangible objects, escaping from the wreck of the past, are pregnant with inference; and they illustrate the progress of society on points which the historiographer neglects, and the poet despises.

The wants of man are, in fact, his great teachers; and the modes he may have adopted for meeting them are infallible indices of his real position in the scale of civilization: for his last point of social refinement is but a more perfect development of some physical resource, and his highest flight of science only a better application of his power in administering to his necessities.

But if annalists have done little for the domestic history of mankind, (so pleasant to read in the preserves of antique chateaux and Gothic mansions,) posterity is the more indebted to the garrulous memoir-writers and quaint diarists, whose *naïve* and simple vanity has found an interest in the minutest details. The charming gossip

of Dame Alienore de Poitiers, the Sieur Brantome, Evelyn, and Pepys, in throwing open the domestic interior of other ages, has enabled us to judge better of the superiority of our own; and they have, by their unsuspecting testimony, destroyed the *prestige* which time had thrown over the morals, the manners, the accommodations, and the wisdom of our ancestors.

The charming pages of writers of this class teem with illustrations of the monuments of domestic art; and the monuments, in turn, become the best commentaries upon their texts. It is thus that much philosophy may be deduced from furniture, and that rooms may be read like records. The *dressoir*, in one age the highest mark of rank in the chambers of aristocracy, but now found only in the kitchen—and the *chaise-à-dos*, once exclusively reserved for royalty, but now rejected as an uneasy seat even by a second-rate tradesman, are sensible and convincing images of the progressive destiny of the species; of the necessity of innovation; and of the hopelessness and the folly of all attempts to throw chains round the mind of man.

Neither the marble palaces of Rome, nor the stately hotels of Paris, radiant in the golden *rococo* of the most gorgeous of all epochs, will stand a moment's comparison with the domiciles of the simplest gentleman of the present times, for light, air, cleanliness or comfort; and the wondrous contrivances for convenience, for safety, and for health, which mark this world of difference, (supplied by the mechanical arts at the call of utility and under the guidance of science,) are but the material and tangible results of that much-dreaded political liberty, which is, in truth and in fact, synonymous for civilization and for happiness.

Of this verity, the manor-house of Mottram in the county of Northampton, and the mansion of Sir Frederick Mottram on Carlton-terrace, were notable illustrations. The manor of Mottram (a Saxon appellation preserved by the Norman adventurers, who at the Conquest obtained the fief) had been brought to the hammer by the representative of fourteen barons and of thirty-two quarterings; and being purchased by a Birmingham manufacturer, reverted to a descendant of the Saxon family, its original founders, whose successive representatives, deprived of their ancient possessions, had fallen from their high estate, and become an obscure and unnoted portion of the plebeian population of the country.

Sir Walter Mottram, baronet, had started in life the porter of a mercantile and manufacturing house in Birmingham, of which he died the opulent and sole head ; and having added to the commoner virtues of industry and prudence, so necessary to advancement in trading life, a high combining faculty, a genius for commerce, a cool courage, and a sound judgment, he had raised one of those colossal fortunes, which, scarcely perhaps equalled in Tyre, Carthage, or the commercial republics of the middle ages, form one of the most distinguishing characters of the passing century in England.

The old baronial edifice, of which Sir Walter became the proprietor, had been preserved with religious care ; and the refitted interior, though in strict keeping with the genius of the place, exhibited every species of improvement derivable from modern taste and science. The wealth of Sir Walter, the fanciful taste of his wife, and the acquired *virtù* of their only son, had rendered Mottram Hall another Houghton. The gallery was scarcely less rich in precious pictures ; and its library was already noted, in the *catalogues déraisonnés* of bibliomaniacs, as among the choicest and rarest in the kingdom.

The house on Carlton-terrace, on the contrary, was altogether as new as the honours of its classical master. The ground on which it stood had been acquired in acquittal of a debt due to the father ; and the house (built under the immediate direction of the son) was an illustration of a system of his own, which combined the maximum of splendour with the greatest possible enjoyment. For Sir Frederick Mottram, nature and education had done much, though birth (in the conventional sense of society) had done nothing. A purer judgment never presided over that most delightful of enterprises (the pride of Pliny and the boast of Cicero), the construction of a home suited to the ‘ elegant desires ’ of early manhood, and to the enjoyment of reposing age. Youth, in its first outburst of life, indulges no such views : its passions are all abroad ; with curiosity, like an *avant-courrier* galloping in the van, it bivouacks in the desert, or revels in the kiosk ; while experience lags slowly in the rear, but finally and inevitably lures back, through ways which satiety tracks and disenchantment roughens.

Sir Frederick Mottram had passed through this fitful and capri-

cious stage of existence, and he believed himself now fitted to live and to enjoy. He had, in his early youth, been a literary enthusiast, a devotee at the shrine of art ; in a word, the true son of a woman of genius, from whom he had received an organization which led to illusions he almost regretted, as being well worth the soberer realities of a too calculating philosophy. On the breaking up of the temple of royal profligacy and extravagance in Pall-mall, he had chosen that site for his town-mansion, as much on account of its thousand historical associations, as of the conveniences of the locality. St. James's Palace and Park, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Hall, Whitehall, its gardens and river scenery, recalled to his glowing fancy the poetry, the history, the gallantry, and the beauty of England,—the shrine of the Church's power—the cradle of a race of kings—the scaffold of one despot, and the harem of another,—the scene where the greatest energies enacted the greatest drama that ever was represented in the cause of civil and religious freedom !

In the mansion of this rich commoner and staunch stickler for high English morality, there was one irregularity ; namely—that the apartments of his wife were mounted upon the same style of luxury and voluptuousness as those of the mistress of Charles the Second, the too-celebrated Duchess of Portsmouth. The dressing-room of Lady Frances was indeed a fac-simile of 'the glorious apartment' recorded by Evelyn, whose words are well worth substituting for a modern description ; and they are equally suited to the purpose, excepting only the presence of the royal lover.

“ Following his Majesty this morning through the gallerie, I went, with the few who attended him, into the Dutchesse of Portsmouth's dressing-roome, within her bed-chamber ; where she was in her morning loose garment, her maids combing her, newly out of bed, his Majesty and the gallants standing about her. But that which engaged my curiosity, was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman's apartment, now twice or thrice pulled down and rebuilt to satisfie her prodigal and expensive pleasures, while her Majesty's does not excede some gentlemen's ladies, in furniture and accommodation. Here I saw the new fabriq of French tapissry, for designe, tendernesse of worke, and incomparable imitation of the best paintings, beyond anything I ever beheld. Some pieces had Versailles,

St. German's, and other palaces of the French King, with huntings, figures, and landships, exotic fowls; and all to the life, rarely don. Then for Japan cabinets, screenes, pendule clocks, greate vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney furniture, sconces, branches, braseras, etc. all of massive silver and out of number, besides some of her Majesty's best paintings."

In such a room, a few hours after Sir Frederick Mottram had returned from the ward of St.—'s workhouse, sat his wife Lady Frances, sunk in the depths of her cushioned gondola. A *déjeûné* of French vermeil stood on a *guéridon* beside her; and her husband's letter (not opened till a few moments before) was in her hands. Low, languid, in all the depression incidental to the excitement of the previous evening, and scarcely able to decipher the petulantly scrawled characters, she threw it carelessly and contemptuously down, with a yawn, and a muttered "Oh! a jobation—tiresome!" A beautiful paroquet, perched on the back of her chair, solicited her attention by the reiterated demand of, "*Aimes-tu Coco?*" to which she replied, in tones almost passionate, "*Oui, je t'aime, mon petit Coco!*"

"*C'est à s'y tromper,*" said Félicité (who was in waiting), with a significant smile.

Lady Frances smiled too; and then drawing her *peignoir* round her swan-like neck, and wrapping her fine form in a *robe-de-chambre*, which the Duchess of Abrantes would have described with truth to be '*mousseline d'Inde, brodée à jours, double rose de Mai,*' she closed her heavy eyes, and resigned her aching head to the hands of one as exhausted, languid, and nerveless as herself: Mademoiselle Félicité having only returned from *her* ball in time to light the tapers on the toilet of her lady, and to be ready for her reception at five in the morning.

When Félicité complained of a '*crispation des nerfs,*' she was dismissed to her *tisane* at the steward's room breakfast-table; and after the lapse of an hour, when green tea and dear St. John's revivifying drops had somewhat restored the animal spirits of Lady Frances, she again took up her husband's letter, and read it through, with a running commentary of "pishes!"—"pshaws!"—"bahs!"—and "*so very tiresomes.*" It frightened her, however, into reflection.

She had lived with her husband for some years in utter estrangement—he for public, she for fashionable, life. Her extravagance and folly were rebuked only when long tradesmen's bills came in and were discharged. Their one whimsical, consumptive child was scarcely a tie between them. To Sir Frederick he was a source of deep mortification—to Lady Frances, a subject of sentimental fondness; undisturbed, however, by any doubts of his rapid recovery, under the care of the infallible Esculapius of her coterie. Sir Frederick had hitherto but rarely interfered with her follies, nor she with his politics; though her friends were ultra conservatives, and he had latterly approached somewhat towards liberalism, by his vote on the Relief Bill; and had consequently in some degree lost caste with those who accuse Sir R. Peel of tergiversation, and 'the Duke' of having given the first blow to 'our glorious constitution.'

But there was in this letter a tone of unprecedented severity, which alarmed, if it did not touch her. Her first thought was to send for the Princess of Schaffenhause, from a recent habit of dependence created by the influence of the foreigner's energetic mind on her constitutional indolence; but a moment's consideration convinced her of the danger of such a proceeding. She placed herself therefore before her *secrétaire*, and drawing, from under the golden clasps of a splendid portfolio, a packet of tiny note paper breathing and blushing roses, she poured forth her fears and doubts to Georgina, Marchioness of Montessor — one whom the 'Age' had that morning characterized as a 'certain profligate and pious peeress of Belgrave-Square;' and whom another Sunday paper, 'The Christian Woman's Vade-Mecum,' had named 'the Fair Samaritan,' for some act performed under the dictation of the *tartufe*, its editor.

The history of fashionable note-writing is a page in the history of the times, as highly illustrative of the manners of the great as any other of more seeming import. In the first go-cart steps of mind, to write a letter was no trifling occurrence: it was a task to undertake, a proof of learning to accomplish, a sign of high calling or eminent birth to desire. Kings and queens, peers, prelates, and ministers, indited letters as guarded as protocols, stiff as exercises, and ceremonious as a herald king-at-arms. But no one dreamed of the familiar intercourse of mind upon paper.

The epistolary correspondence of private friends was revived in that

most social of all regions, France; and it owed its origin, as most pleasant, if not wise things do, to woman. Letters, in their modern form, uses, and appliance, first became a fashion in the seventeenth century, and in the court of Louis XIV.; and the first eminent professors of the charming art were Madame de Sévigné, and her contemporaries, Mesdames La Fayette, de Coulanges, de l'Enclos, de Maintenon, and others.

When there was no periodical press, no public journals, no printed channels for political or social information, the correspondence of women of fashion, of "*la cour et la ville*," supplied their place; but, as yet, the necessity of daily, hourly note-writing, with its consequent *éloquence du billet*, was not surmised. It was reserved to England, in the nineteenth century, to strike out such a mystery; * and the whole business of high society in London is now carried on by the instrumentality of reams of the smallest paper, of every hue of the rainbow—sometimes the circulating medium of thought, feeling, fancy—but oftener of folly, falsehood, and idleness.

The genius of note-writing is not inseparably connected with any other genius. Its merit is a facile narration of frivolous facts, requiring no ideas, and demanding no wit. The dullest dames are often the most voluminous note-writers; and they get rid of their garrulity upon paper, with the same strenuous idleness with which they discharge it in verbal exuberance in society. Every coterie (and the society of London is divided into coteries, each with its autocrat, its politics, and its prejudices,) has its own style of billet, made up of conventional phrases, *petits mots d'énigme*, *sobriquets*, etc. — the dictionary of its daily, or rather nightly, interviews.

Among the most distinguished of these coteries was that of which the Marchioness of Montessor and Lady Frances Mottram were the heads; and their morning correspondence on the subject of Sir Fre-

* The gossiping intercourse of fine ladies was formerly conducted by servants—a custom alluded to by Archer, in the 'Beaux Stratagem,' where he details what he calls a 'How-do-ye,' to be delivered *viva voce*, from his mistress to her friend. The allusion will soon be lost in England, though in Italy the usage of long complimentary messages is still retained.

derick's letter will furnish an appropriate illustration of an art which has reached the last finish of its frivolous perfection.

“ TO THE MARCHIONESS MONTRESSOR.

“ DEAREST GEORGY,—Do come to me, if you can. If you are too delicate or too pious to dine out on Sundays, at least look in on me after church. I want you most particularly, and cannot go to Arlington-street, because I am regularly done up, after this last week. Besides, I have really no means of going out, or I would try and go to you to-night. Sir Frederick has taken the second coachman to Lady John's; and Saunders says he has got the influenza, from being out all night, and every night this week: but Félicité says he's sulky, because he lost five hundred to the Duke's coachman at Epsom. Servants are becoming really too bad.

“ But I have got into such a mess, dear! — Sir Frederick is grown so tiresome and ill-tempered, you have no idea. If by chance you have seen your husband or Lord Aubrey to-day, they must have told you of the scene in the Round-room last night. It was vulgar and brutal, and a great triumph to the Greenfelts, the tiresome M^cQuerys, and other quizzes whom I have cut this season. Unluckily, I did not get home from the dear Princess's *media-noche* (which was beyond) till four this morning. Sir F. sat up till three, and then wrote me *such* a note, you have no idea! In short, it is becoming no joke: he hinted at separation if I did not give up the Princess; and all sorts of nonsense about her bad reputation, as if she was worse than other foreign women of her rank and fortune.

“ Now I want you most particularly to give me your advice. You and Lord Aubrey are so *very* clever on such points, and he won't dine here if you don't. Most unluckily, Claude Campbell, too, who came up to the Opera last night without leave from the royalties, was obliged to scamper back to Kew from the princess's. So, dear, I have no one whose advice I can ask, or take, but yours. But I'm resolved not to give in: if I once *do that*, the game is up. Don't you think so?

“ The worst of it is, I want money terribly. I'm up to my eyes in debt to Howell and James, to Carson, and to Storr and Mortimer, for all sorts of *misères*; and cousin Claude Campbell has settled for

me, all this season, at the Dowager Dunstable's *écarté* table. Poor boy! he is a delight of a cousin! But we have hit on such a scheme—a racing-table!

“Observe, I don't want to provoke Sir F. *too far*; but I won't give up the ‘High Transparency,’ as Alfred Montessor calls her, for a thousand reasons. If our summer tour goes on, her castle on the Rhine, or somewhere, will be worth anything: so I must humour the ‘*house-meestre*,’ as the Princess calls Sir F., who, by the bye, has never seen her. He is so prejudiced; and she hides so drolly when he comes into the house; for she either hates or fears him. Now, send Lord Aubrey to me, if he is with you, or write me a few lines; for I must make up my mind before to-morrow morning, as I am off at one o'clock for aunt Di Campbell's *déjeûné* at Richmond, where the Duke and Duchess, and Claude, and all the world, are coming.

“Day, day, dear!

“Yours, FRANCES M.”

“P.-S.—Will your *thé* really go on to night? They were saying at the Opera, that good Mrs. Medlicot was urging you to give up your Sunday *thés*, and to cut poor dear Aubrey into the bargain; and the Princess said something in French about rouge and the president, * that was so droll it set them all laughing.

“On consideration, I send you Sir Frederick's letter by Hippolyte (for, *entre nous*, I can trust no one else); you will then be able to judge.

“F. M.”

Answer.

“TO LADY FRANCES MOTTRAM.

“I keep your page, dear child, to take this back, as I do not let my servants out on Sundays, except to church. I heard all about the *scena* in the Round-room—not from the inseparables,

* “*Pour ce qui est du rouge et du président, je ne leur ferai point l'honneur de les quitter:*” the observation of Madame du Deffand in her own attempt at reformation.

for I have not seen my husband or Lord Aubrey to-day. I had not come from church, when they looked in. I *did* hear it though, in full, from Lady Anastatia M'Query, just as I was getting into my chair, in the porch of St. James's, (like Clarissa, I am never too ill to go to church.) She thrust her long scraggy neck down into the chair, and smelt so of garlic, (you know all the ladies M'Query eat Bologna sausages for breakfast,) that I have been obliged to have the chair fumigated; and caught fresh cold by letting the window down coming across the square. She was full of the scene last night. She said, that Sir Frederick actually dragged you away by the arm; that cousin Claude came to the rescue, and that the Princess clapped you on the back, and cried '*Courage, mon enfant!*' : and then, alluding to Sir Frederick's plebeian origin, she exclaimed, 'Hey! mi Leddy Montessor,—but the Duke is weel servit : a pretty alliance for Lady Frances de Vere! what would you ha fra' a cat but her skin?'

“ Well, my child, this is all very bad, I allow. Such things give a *ridicule ineffaçable!* but remember, no separation! mind that. First, in a religious point of view, separation is sinful : as St. Paul says, in dear Mrs. Medlicot's 'Tracts of Ton,' 'Let not the wife depart from the husband.' Besides, there is all the difference in the world, dear, between a princely mansion in Carlton-terrace and a 'box' in Cadogan-place, or a *sweet little* cottage at Tonbridge : and believe me, Fanny sweetest, it will come to that. Remember Lady Ascot, who parted from her husband, intact as to character, and from mere incompatibility of temper; yet how she went down! Who ever hears or speaks of her now, though she has a house at Brighton, and goes to the Queen's balls? Nothing should induce you to part from Sir Frederick. Your conscience tells you, that you are innocent, and Sir F. wrong—I do not dispute it; and there are many reasons to warrant your opposing his vulgar caprices and plebeian prejudice; the more extraordinary in the son of an actress, who, of course, was not over rigid. But remember, 'all things that are lawful are not expedient,' as Mrs. Medlicot says; and as the Princess is going away, and actually leaves London for the Continent at the end of the season, I would make a virtue of necessity, and offer to give her up at once. The Princess knows all the bitter things Sir

Frederick says of her, and would be the first to laugh at your hesitating. Do anything rather than come to a separation, which is foolish, vulgar, and highly irreligious.

“I shall give tea as usual; it is now almost the only peep at the world my health, and indeed my way of thinking, allow me to take. You must come, child. Some of your dinner folk will bring you; and your brother, who will be here, will set you down. But remember, love, *I do not receive till ten minutes after midnight.*

“I will not keep your pretty page any longer. What a nice boy! I have had him up in my dressing-room, and talked to him of his catechism. He knows nothing; so I have given him Mrs. Medlicot’s ‘Tracts for the Domestics of Noble Houses.’”

“P.-S.—Don’t talk of my *thé* before the Princess. I really cannot ask her, *en petit comité*; she talks so freely on serious subjects, like all foreigners: and Mrs. Medlicot means to bring Kitty Conran, the Irish saint, as she is called. It is all the fashion to have her. I return your husband’s jobation. By the bye, he was seen in a very equivocal situation, getting into a hackney-coach at three this morning. Make Alfred Montessor tell you all about it. “G. M.”

Lady Frances was still reading the pale, blue pages of Lady Montessor’s epistle, when the Princess of Schaffhausen was announced. Lady Frances huddled up her letter; but not before the Princess’s quick eye detected the action.

“I see I am *de trop*,” she said, throwing herself into an arm-chair opposite to Lady Frances, after having kissed her cheek.

“That letter interests you; and I don’t—*now*.”

“*Comment, ma belle!* You always interest me.”

“No—no—finish your letter, *ma petite*, and then we’ll talk. It is from Lady Montessor. Stay, you have dropped an enclosure—*protocole de mari!*”

Lady Frances coloured, and opened her eyes.

“How do you know that?”

“I am just come from Arlington-street; and the Marchesa has put me into your confidence.”

She laughed, sunk back in her chair, laid her elbows on its arms,

clasped her fingers, and fixed her friend with eyes of no ordinary expression and penetration.

“How very foolish!” said Lady Frances, much annoyed.

“Not at all foolish, child—only false. You are all *THAT, vous autres*. You betray each other, for ever, in your idleness and garrulity. There is no point of honour in your coteries; for, if rogues can sometimes be true to each other, rogueses never can. Your friendships are but masked rivalries. By the bye, why do you muffle yourself up in that *chevaux-de-frise* of lace and ribbon? Such things only become the *figures chiffonnées* of French *petites-maîtresses*—they are not for true English beauty.”

She arose, took off Madame Devy’s ‘last’ from her friend’s head, and drawing out the whole back of a tortoise in form of a comb, let fall that profusion of fair hair which gave to Lady Frances’s languid beauty its true character and appropriate embellishment.

“There, child—your *connaisseur de mari*, in his collection of Grammont beauties in the salon *là-bas*, has nothing like that: you are precisely *la belle Jennings*. Why don’t you receive him at breakfast just so? A pretty woman is never so irresistible as in the freshness of the morning and of the morning toilet: you mistake it altogether.”

“But, Princess,” said Lady Frances, glancing at an opposite mirror in conscious beauty, and ever charmed by flattery at all hours and from all persons, “I never see my husband at breakfast; and, at this season, but rarely at dinner—that is, at home. We sometimes do dine out together.”

“Yes, I know. I’ve seen you perched up in the same chariot, like two sulky birds in a cage after a pecking-match. You are both to blame; you most, as being the superior animal.”

Lady Frances smiled, and shook her head.

“Yes, you are, by nature, if there was any nature about you; but there is not.”

Lady Frances laughed.

“How very odd you are!”

“It is true,” said the Princess. “The state of what you call high society in England is so artificial, that there is not a trace of nature to be found among you. Your religion, your morality, your hours, your habits, even your follies—all are artificial and conven-

tional. But you are reaching that solstice, beyond which no society can go. ”

“ I don’t understand you. ”

“ Well, then, the reign of fine-ladyism, the despotism of coteries, are crumbling away. Almack’s, like Westminster Abbey, once destined to illustrate only the great, will be thrown open to all who can pay for their admission. Do you understand that ? ”

“ There is something in it, ” said Lady Frances, gravely. “ Almack’s is not what it was. What is to be done ? ”

“ Now, that you are all nearly undone,—nothing. Stand aside, let the torrent pass. You cannot stop it, though you may be overwhelmed in the attempt. ”

“ This is odd, from you ! ” said Lady Frances.

“ One may act wrong, ” replied the Princess, “ yet think right ; and may sin, as you English call it, without being absolutely a fool. Lady Montessor has told me all. Your husband wants an excuse to part from you, and has hit upon me. What advice has your friend, the Marchesa, given you ? She told me that she had written. ”

“ Since you know all, ” said Lady Frances, “ there is her letter ; she deserves that I should show her up. ”

“ To be sure she does. *Voyons donc.* ”

The Princess threw off a large bonnet, flung aside a black cashmir shawl, and read the letter, so carelessly confided to her. It was the peculiar character of the Princess of Schaffenhause’s countenance and person, to make a picture, in whatever light or position she placed herself. Even the insipid, languid, unimaginative Lady Frances felt this as she gazed on her ; and she looked with a mixture of fear and admiration. Her head was enveloped in a black crape, so as wholly to conceal her hair, while it defined the form of her high, clear forehead, which was marked almost as with a straight line by her black and mobile eyebrows. Her large grey eyes were shaded, not concealed, by their dark projecting lids and silken lashes, which fell upon a cheek, of that deep rich tone of colouring, which, though not bloom, expresses the circulation of health in every vein : a dress of black crape, terminated at the neck and wrists with snow-white Vandyke, giving relief to a sombre habiliment, otherwise ill suited to the gaiety of the season. A crimson breviary, clasped with gems, lay upon her knee, (for she came

from the Bavarian Chapel, where Pasta and Malibran had been singing,) and a superb ivory cross hung from her neck by a rosary of antique form and materials : the *ensemble* gave her the air of a picture by Hals or Velasquez.

While reading Lady Montessor's epistle, the concentrated expression of her countenance yielded, more than once, to a smile of humour and finesse, which, in parting lips of the most delicate form and coral hue, displayed two rows of pearly teeth. Beautiful as was the smile, it had a very sinister expression ; and it might well have passed for that of a handsome imp.

She laid the letter on the table.

" Well," said Lady Frances, " what do you think ? "

" That your friend is a fool—as the false ever are ; and that her letter is a tissue of cant and nonsense. Shall I answer your husband's letter for you ? "

The incorrigible Lady Frances burst into a fit of laughter.

" That would be too pleasant ! "

" You must first let me see it. "

Lady Frances put her husband's letter into the Princess's hands, who read it calmly and smilingly, as if her own vices had not formed its principal subject.

" Give me pen, ink, and paper," she said.

Lady Frances rung the golden bell on her table for the page, who was in the veranda tying flowers. The *secrétaire* was placed before the Princess, and the boy dismissed. After a silence of many minutes, Lady Frances, who had stretched herself in her easy chair, overcome by languor and exhaustion, fell fast asleep. The heat of the morning flushed her cheek, which her fair and flowing tresses shaded. Meantime, the paroquet, perched on the back of her chair, weary of the confinement, after sundry efforts broke the thread which confined it, and flew away.

The Princess, after a moment's pause, threw down her pen, and seizing a pencil, with the aid of a little rouge borrowed from the adjoining toilet, produced a beautiful *croquis* of the beautiful subject. The resemblance, though flattering, was perfect. The bird was in the act of flying off ; and a motto was written beneath, " *Qui me néglige, me perd.* "

The Princess, having finished her sketch, touched the cheek of

the fair sleeper with the feather of a pen : she started, rubbed her eyes—

“ I was dreaming,” she said : and she paused, smiled, and blushed.

“ Of Claude Campbell,” said the Princess, fixing her eyes on her.

“ How very odd ! Yes, I dreamed he was my paroquet, and that he had flown away.”

“ And so he will,” said the Princess : “ you may chain an eagle, but you will never attach a parrot.”

“ You may be a sorceress, but you are no prophetess,” said Lady Frances, taking the hit as it was intended.

“ Suppose I were both ?” said the Princess.

“ Where is the answer to Sir Frederick’s letter ?” asked Lady Frances, with an expression of humour.

“ Here it is !” said the Princess, presenting the beautiful sketch, of which Lawrence, who thought much more of his drawings than of his paintings, might have been proud.

“ Gracious !” said Lady Frances, delighted ; “ why, it is a picture !—it is *me* ! so very like ! and Coco flying away too !—my very dream !”

“ Yes, your dream : awake, then ; rouse yourself ! Your bird and your boy, let them both go : they belong not to you, not to your position. Wife and mother, give up folly before it gives up you ; and let taste at least do what feeling may fail to suggest.”

The Princess was standing with her hand spread upon the shoulder of the almost frightened Lady Frances, who looked up in her face with an expression of timidity and surprise. The sternness of Madame Schaffenhause’s countenance changed like a rainbow, and a smile the most playful came over her features. She drew her chair close to Lady Frances’s, and taking both hands in hers, she said, with a half-laugh—

“ I have frightened, but I only want to warn, you. Hear me, and then—we have done, for ever ! That little cousin of yours is a little profligate—and a little fool, *par-dessus le marché* : but he is the real cause of your husband’s displeasure ; I am only the ostensible pretext.”

“ No, no, he hates you,” said Lady Frances, with *naïveté* ; “ they have put horrible things into his head about you.”

“ Yes, I know : they have told him I am a sort of a Madame de C——, a political *intrigante*, one who carries a printing-press in her dressing-box. ”

“ Oh ! worse than that ! ”

The Princess sunk back in an easy attitude, and continued : “ An *affaire de sentiment* with Metternich, probably ? ”

“ *Encore pire*, ” said Lady Frances, smiling.

“ My being *la femme à main gauche*, then, of the Prince ? ”

“ Oh ! worse, worse, worse !—Now, don’t be angry, dearest Princess ! ”

“ I ?—not in the least.—Something about a husband missing, perhaps ? ”

Lady Frances threw down her eyes and coloured.

“ But, *belle enfant*, if all this were true, do you think I should be received in the first society of England ! run after ! courted ! my house never empty ! and my porter’s book always full ? ”

“ People are not so very particular about foreign princes and princesses, ” lisped Lady Frances.

“ No, ” said the Princess, significantly ; “ nor with domestic ones neither. A crime or a vice more or less, is easily forgiven or forgotten here, provided rank or party give *le mot d’ordre* ! But, never mind me and my vices. Sir Frederick is not so prudish as to be shocked at the failings of a German princess ; but he hates me personally, because some of my dear, trust-worthy friends have repeated an epigram or two, which have touched his *amour-propre* where it is most susceptible. He hates me, too, for the influence he supposes I have over you, and by which they say I mean to get at him : that is, he has been told so by your dear friend the Marchioness : the world sets me down as a sort of political Mrs. Medlicot, or something worse. ”

“ Oh ! *par exemple*, he is right as to your extraordinary influence over me : Claude says it is a spell. ”

“ Yes ; the spell of convenience. You like my house, and my parties ; and the freedom of foreign habits suits your purposes. ”

“ No, no, ” said Lady Frances, smiling and caressing her ; “ I like yourself and your society for its own sake. ”

“ You never missed it last night ? ” said the Princess.

Lady Frances opened her eyes. “ Missed you ? ”

“ All charming as I am, nobody missed me ! ”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ Only that I was otherwise employed than presiding over orgies, of which I am, truth to tell, completely *ennuyée* ! But you had my house. And now to the point. Send this portrait to your husband; it is the best answer to his letter. There is no reasoning with man. He is the spoiled child of institutions and society. Woman never speaks to his sense, but only to his senses; one image, such as this, is worth all Lushington ever uttered in Doctors’ Commons, of neglected duties, and the carelessness of husbands.

“ The motto, you see, is a common-place ! No matter. The application will supply the want of originality. The image is poetry, and will go home to his imagination, when all the prose in the world would fail to interest or move his feelings in your behalf. But mind, you must send an apology to aunt Di. Those picnics are dangerous things : and when Sir Frederick arrives from Lady John Montessor’s, you must receive him just as you are, *entendez-vous* ? When you perfectly understand each other,” she added archly, “ why then you shall propose going a tour this summer ; and ”

“ That,” interrupted Lady Frances, eagerly, “ is precisely what I was thinking about. We are planning a tour, and a visit to your castle on the Rhine. I must go somewhere ; I am so very shattered. The Montessors talk of Baden, when the House is up ; and we can take you on our way, you know.”

“ And as Sir Frederick threatens separation if you do not give me up ”

“ Gracious ! I had forgot that : but that is only one of his fits of temper ; and when he sees this very pretty picture, he will admire it so very much, it will set all to rights. I have it at heart to bring you together : the ice once broken, I know he would fall in love with you.”

The Princess looked on her earnestly. An air of thoughtful abstraction gradually replaced the glance of ridicule, which gave to her mobile countenance its most habitual expression.

Some minutes elapsed before Lady Frances, who was engaged in admiring her own likeness, inquired—

“ What are you thinking about, *ma belle* ? ”

“ I am thinking,” said the Princess, “ that original conformation

is superior to all impression; and that, what is pedantically called the power of reason, is only the adaptability of certain truths to certain dispositions."

"I do not understand you," said Lady Frances, caressing the bird, which had flown back to its perch on her chair.

"If you could, the observation would not have been made :—*vous n'êtes pas impressionable, chère amie.*"

"There is one who does not think so," muttered Lady Frances, half aside.

There was a pause. The princess took up the Red-book, and fluttered over the pages, till she came to the marriage of the Duke of Caithness with "Lady Frances Alicia Caroline, etc., daughter of Francis Marquis of Montessor, by whom he had, first, Frances, etc. etc."

"I thought so," said the Princess; "you have that foolish Montessor blood in your veins! Your mother was a Montessor. From such a horoscope it would be easy to cast your fortune."

"Oh! but don't!" said Lady Frances, starting. "I like to live *au jour la journée*: one never can answer for oneself."

"And, least of all," said the Princess, "when one is *entre deux âges*!—that twilight of the passions, when one gropes oneself into a scrape, which in youth one would have wanted the courage, and in age the desire, to encounter.

"I see, by this book, you are just thirty-five; two years older than myself: a glorious age for a woman, (were she one who knows how to make use of it;) the prime of her beauty, of her genius, and her knowledge. But, if she resemble that bird that pecks from your hand; if her head be small, her eyes wide apart, her nose aquiline, and her features rigid; if she be easy to flatter, and difficult to fix; thirty-five is a perilous age: look to that! I give you one year only to be saved or lost. Your beauty may do much now with your husband, but not *all*: 'the bending statue which delights the world,' is but the representation of what you English call a Becky; and though you were Venus de Medicis stepped from off her pedestal, you will neither recover nor retain a passionate and intellectual man, such as your husband, if there is only that."

Lady Frances tossed her head, and lowered, and then smiled, not quite sure whether she should be flattered or offended by this speech.

The Becky, weighed in the scales with the Venus de Medicis, almost kicked the beam.

The Princess rose, and Lady Frances made no attempt to detain her; she only said, rather coldly—

“ Well, I will try the effect of your portrait. I am sure I don’t want to quarrel with Sir Frederick just now—it would be particularly inconvenient. But, you have not told me what defence I am to make for you to Sir Frederick. He is so very prejudiced! ”

“ Prejudice is rarely to be argued with, ” said the Princess, after a long silence. “ The wounds of self-love, like those of some reptiles, have their best remedy in the source from which they derive their venom. ”

“ But we really must go and see you this summer in your castle on the Rhine, ” said Lady Frances, returning to the point.

“ I fear my chateau on the Rhine will turn out a *château en Espagne*. The widow of my late husband’s eldest brother, who is a German, held it in abhorrence, and suffered it to go out of order. But I have a pretty *rendez-vous de chasse* in the forest of Soignes, near Brussels. ”

“ That sounds charming, ” said Lady Frances, smilingly : “ but I don’t think any of our men would like to go to Brussels at present. ”

“ I can conceive that, ” said the princess, drily.

“ And you, Princess,—I wonder, with your principles, you ever mean to return to that revolutionary country. ”

“ I am not such a partisan, ” said the Princess, “ as to set principles at odds with property. ”

“ But you will not be so *bête* as to trust yourself there, ” interrupted Lady Frances, impatiently, “ before the Nassaus return? ”

“ *Pas si bête*, ” said the Princess. “ I should not like to wait *quite* so long, for the enjoyment of my pretty Pavillon de Gröndael, where I have all sorts of workmen now employed. These are not times to dally with enjoyment: ‘*aujourd’hui Dauphine, demain rien.*’ Whatever may be my opinion of the Belgian government, I have but one of the country—that it is beautiful and prosperous. Besides, the Schaffenhausen estate, in the arrondissement of Soignes, is worth triple the old ruins and uncertain vineyards of the Rhyngau; and now, wealth is my object; for wealth is everything : it is what

knowledge was in one age, and numbers in another. But— —” She paused abruptly, and laughed.

“ You think I don’t understand you,” said Lady Frances; “ but I really do. I agree that wealth is everything. See what the V.’s have done this season, against the superior wealth of H— —House ! There was a hard struggle for it, though, I assure you ; but now they are reduced to eighteen thousand a-year, poor dears ! Supposing, however, we vanquished Sir Frederick’s prejudices against you, I don’t see how any friends of the poor dear Nassaus could go to Belgium.”

“ *Is* Sir Frederick Mottram the friend of the King of Holland ?” interrupted the Princess.

“ Why, you know the Prince of Orange is a very old friend of mine ; and when we were in Brussels in Twenty-nine, they were so very civil ! I had the Prince’s horses, and his box at the *spectacle* and at the race-course ; and we dined at Laeken repeatedly.”

“ What brought you to Brussels ?” asked the Princess, sitting down again, with a new interest in the conversation.

“ We were returning from a short trip to Italy, and so we came home by Brussels, where I knew such quantities of nice people ! the D’Arembergs, the De Lignes, the D’Ursels, and the De Trazignies ; the Merodes, and Vilain Quatorze, and the D’Hoogvoorsts—and, above all, the dear Prince of Orange ! It was the most delightful month of my life ! It would break my heart to go there now ; and Mottram hates the Belgian revolution as much as I do.”

“ Why ?” asked the Princess.

“ Why, you know our party say that his best speech, this sessions, was his quizzing the protocols, and his hit at Lord Palmerston and the ministers, and all that sort of thing. You know I hate politics, though I do belong to Georgina Montessor’s set. But what a state of things, as she says, without a religion or a king ! for Leopold the First will be Leopold the Last. It can never go on, as ‘the Age’ says.”

“ Humph !” said the Princess ; “ that seems to be the general opinion—or wish, at least here : —among your set particularly.”

“ Oh ! universally. It is such a bad example ! it is quite ridiculous ! Lord Montessor says, they have not one advocate in the House ; and Sir Frederick, I know, thinks Belgium must go

to France: I'm sure I don't know how! But I hope the Prince of Orange will get back to Brussels, where he has such a delight of a palace!"

"For one who knows nothing of politics, the Belgian revolution seems to have interested you, however?" observed the Princess.

"Oh! it did so, very much,—at the time: you have no idea how much it has bored me, and overturned all my plans. Lord Montessor was to have gone there as ambassador. I forget why he wished it; something about a *corps de ballet* he was to get up, and the races with dear Prince Frederick. I was to have gone on a visit to the Montessors, without Sir Frederick, who was then so very deep in politics."

"You were *épris* then with the Prince of Orange, and calculated on passing a pleasant winter at Brussels, as *dame du palais*, when that vulgar revolution interrupted all?"

"Just that—as far as going to Brussels is concerned," said Lady Frances, laughing; but I assure you, *en tout bien et tout honneur*."

"Oh! of course: and now, adieu! a long adieu!" said the Princess, rising and putting on her large bonnet. "You may, in perfect surety of conscience, tell your husband that you give me up; for I give you up, from henceforth. I will not dine with you to-day."

"No! Why not?"

"Because I will no longer be a cause of uneasiness to that worthy man, your husband."

"But he need know nothing about it."

"There must be no equivocation," said the Princess, decidedly. Lady Frances shook her head.

"I can never receive you under other circumstances," continued the Princess, coldly, "than that of your accompanying your husband, or coming with his consent."

"Then you will never receive me at all," said Lady Frances, peevishly, the tears gathering in her eyes: "so there is an end of our charming plans."

"We shall see," said the Princess, cheerfully; and then, taking up her sketch, and looking earnestly on it, she said, "Leave this on your husband's study-table, at all events."

“ And when he asks me who drew it ? ”

“ Tell the truth. ”

“ Then he must know all ? ” said Lady Frances.

“ And so he ought—and so he will ! The world has done with mysteries, public and private : subterfuge is weakness, and concealment but the first step to discovery. Write down then among the roses, the violets, and other flowery *fadaises* of your pretty album, and bear it constantly in your mind, that

‘ Tôt ou tard, tout est su ! ’

Farewell ! ”

The Princess glided out of the room ; and Lady Frances, mistaking exhaustion and annoyance for sensibility, and self-commiseration for the regrets of friendship, burst into tears ; and then rung for æther, and her maid.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RACING-TABLE.

THE scene in the Round-room of the Opera, of which Sir Frederick and Lady Frances Mottram had been the protagonists, had furnished a rich feast of scandalous commentary to the frivolous, the curious, and the malignant. Lady Anastatia M'Query, a ways-and-means lady of quality, and one of the four unmarried, unportioned daughters of a poor Scotch peer, had found the tale a sort of passport to many houses, where she had previously worn out her welcome, with her stock of toad-eating flattery, or stretched her intrusions beyond the patient forbearance of connexion or of hospitality. The good Mrs. Medlicot, too, had turned the matrimonial *fracas* to her own account, by making it the text for many a homily upon the darkness of a benighted and God-abandoned age. More

than one noble substitute for the penny-a-line men of the party journals had served up the adventure in various forms; which were followed up by paragraphs, on 'the illness of Sir Frederick Mottram;' his 'absence from his seat in the House of Commons;' 'unexpected embarrassments;' 'separation on the tapis;' 'affair of jealousy;' 'Chiltern Hundreds,' etc. etc. : and a month passed away, before the public, and its 'best possible instructors,' had worn the subject to rags, and abandoned it for newer game.

Among the various annoyances thus pressed upon the sensitive feelings and nervous irritability of Sir Frederick Mottram, he found some consolation in the discovery to which they led, that he had yet a friend deeply interested in his happiness, and watchful over his career; a friend of his early years, from whom time and chance had latterly estranged him. A letter from this friend, Horace Harvey, after a silence of some years, fell upon his blighted and hopeless spirit, like a refreshing dew on the scathed flowers of an arid plain. It ran as follows :—

“ TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM, BART., CARLTON-TERRACE, LONDON.

“ Glen Druid, Northamptonshire.

“ MY DEAR MOTTRAM,—These are strange times, when the public is placed in a man's confidence before his oldest friends, and when newspapers openly discuss what intimacy shrinks from touching. The conservative journals, I know not why, have lately been pecking at you with unusual virulence; the Whigs, of course, have not spared you; and there is a pertinacity in their references to certain points connected with your interior life, which (maugre the little regard due to such authorities) makes me anxious and uneasy.

“ The 'Post' of this morning states that you are about to accept the Chiltern Hundreds; and hints that you are injured in your fortunes, and are going to reside abroad;—the 'Standard,' after some coarse accusations of political tergiversation, has an obscure paragraph concerning domestic disquietudes;—the 'Globe' (more alarming) talks of ill health; and there is an anecdote in the 'Age,' full of dashes and asterisks, with an allusion to Lady Frances, to a

certain '*petit cousin*,' and a German Princess ; ending with a plain assertion, that you are about to separate from your wife. Is it possible that there can be truth in any one of these statements? or is it but the usual effort to supply the rage for party calumny and personal anecdote?

“ Aware, as I am, that causes will bring forth their appropriate effects; and fearing, as I have long done, that the position in which circumstances and family ambition had thrown you, would prove anything but favourable to health, fortune, or domestic peace; still I am shocked—grieved. It can be no ordinary event that would drive Frederick Mottram from a public career, in which he has been so successful; and the Chiltern Hundreds' story (which is in some measure confirmed to me from another source) makes me fear for the accomplishment of my own prediction. I have long inferred, particularly since the change in Ministry and the Reform, that your opinions have not always been in unison with your position as a partisan : but, whatever disgusts or disagreements may have arisen, I cannot think they would drive you, by quitting Parliament, to abandon a career for which you have made so many sacrifices.

“ That your health should be giving way under the late hours of the House of Commons, and the dissipations of a London life, would not surprise me. When last we met, I noticed the inroads which too close an attendance on office had made on a constitution not formed to stand the wear and tear of vulgar contention. Even this, however, would be preferable to disappointment in a quarter, the more difficult to endure, because it is one in which, as you have so often lamented, you do not wholly feel yourself exempt from self-reproach. On that point I could never agree with you: sharing all your convictions on '*incompatibility*,' '*misplaced ambition*,' etc. etc., I still thought that deference to a parent's wishes put you completely *rectus in curia*, respecting your marriage; and I am satisfied that, as far as respects yourself, no woman could have just cause to regret placing her happiness in your keeping.

“ I cannot, therefore, believe the separation story, in whole or in part; and if there be any truth in your retirement from Parliament, if either your health or temper have been ruffled by recent events, let me prescribe for you a visit to Mottram Hall, where I can give you a meeting. I should propose going to London myself, but my

mother is just now in one of her paroxysms of suffering, and must not be left.

“Write to me, then, I beseech you. I think I have claims on your confidence, and that I am not without sufficient feeling and experience to be serviceable in any worldly emergency. Minds like yours are too apt to be put out of tune by the jarring of some petty chord, and to be let down in the heated and unnatural atmosphere of the world of fashion. If this be your case, I am morally, intellectually, and personally your fittest physician; and a good dose of my Pantagruelian pococuranteism will do more to set you right, than all the stoicism in Epictetus.

“Time and the world, my dear Mottram, have rushed strangely between us, since, in our relation of tutor and pupil, (a relationship scarcely warranted by the slight difference of years,) we laid the foundation of a friendship which we then thought no circumstance could interrupt. The bankruptcy of my father, the extraordinary success of yours, have alike contributed to turn us both from the path of our hopes and expectations. Of you Fortune has made a statesman, and has wedded you into one of the proudest and most powerful families in our peerage: of me she has disposed in single blessedness, and in retirement from all serious affairs; a philosophical hermit, poor, but contented—a cynic, but not a Heraclitus.

“Had I not, coxcomb as I was, aspired to your sister, and, still worse, preached liberalism to yourself, I might have risen to wealth and consideration; and had you married that impersonation of Byron’s ‘beautiful spirit,’—that most gifted and unfortunate of an unfortunate class,—how different might have been our lot! You, at least, might have been more useful to your species, more elevated in your ambition, and, perhaps, more happy, than accident, or rather uncontrollable necessity, has left you. United to the woman of your choice, her restless energies would have roused your less active temperament; her intense devotedness would have met your passionate feelings; and her love and genius for the arts would have nourished that highest and purest source of human enjoyment, for which you were born. But I will not farther impose on your time and patience. I hear your apartments at Mottram Hall are getting ready for your reception: we shall soon meet there. In the mean while, satisfy my uneasiness at these *voces ambiguas*.

“ By the way, who *is* this German Princess? Can she be a Princess of Schaffenhauseu, who lately wrote to me to express her desire of possessing your mother’s picture, in the character of Rosalind, by Romney; for which she offered any price I might choose to put on it? She says she wants it to complete a collection of English painters; but her earnestness about a master whose works are not rare, is a good specimen of the peremptoriness of an aristocratic volition. She shan’t have it at any price!

“ Affectionately yours,

“ HORACE HARVEY.”

To this letter Sir Frederick Mottram promptly replied. His answer ran thus:—

“ TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ., GLEN DRUID, NORTH HANTS.

“ Carlton-terrace.

“ MY DEAR HORACE,—I thank you for your letter. I can understand that you made an effort on yourself to write it; for I am aware that I have sailed in the north of your philosophical and political opinions, for the last few years; and that, in spite of your professions, (you were not wont to make them,) I am more indebted to your compassion, or, perhaps, to the triumph of your pride of prophecy, than to any great sympathy you can have in my destinies.

“ Well, I have no split with my party; though some of its out-and-out men totally disagree with me on one or two questions; and affect to attribute this difference to the leaven of my plebeian origin and early connexions. Neither have any articles of separation been drawn up between me and Lady Frances: we are pretty much where we have been for many years; and ‘the boy’ alluded to is my wife’s godson and cousin.

“ You must remember, a few years back, the pretty imp that enacted Tom Thumb, when my wife got up her private theatricals at Mottram Hall. You may have seen her then kiss his peachy cheek, pat his head, and plat his fair and flaxen locks with flowers.

His cheek is still as peachy, his locks as flaxen, and his head as empty, as ever. Jealous of such a thing as that!—Oh! no!

“ My wife is what the world calls virtuous : her vanity stands in the place of passion ; and her social habits, of all ties, feelings, and predilections. She lives with a set, and knows and sees nothing beyond it. Her intimates are false, foolish, and heartless ; but still persons of high consideration. I have entire confidence in her *virtue*, though none in her conduct. Her virtue—were it otherwise!—Tut! the very idea is heart-sickening, maddening! As if any one with the spirit, nay, with the passions of a man, would await for the most degrading conviction ; would patiently pause for a ‘ damning witness,’ and then show himself up as dupe and victim, in terms which the world’s laugh has marked down for eternal ridicule !

“ Every pulse in my body throbs to bursting at the bare idea. I have no melancholy and gentlemanly philosophy about me to bear me up under such circumstances. Such patient forbearance, with its good taste and good keeping, belongs only to the *gentlemen* by descent and alliance, whose fathers have endured the same infliction before them, and bequeathed to their sons their *honours* and their contempt for public opinion. I am not of these ; I am a plebeian, the son of a man who was of the unwashed people—of a man, every inch a man, but no gentleman. The muscles that earned his daily bread would have crushed a gentleman to the earth. His pains-taking industry and sagacious calculations raised him up the wealth which bought from these high-minded and proud gentlemen a participation of their boasted honours.

“ It was gold (gold, honourable in the hands of the industry that acquired it, but base and infamous in those of the creatures who bartered for it their incommunicable birthrights,)—it was gold that placed us in the ranks of the aristocracy ; *with* them, not *of* them. For years I have been reproached with these things, and twitted with frequent allusions to my father’s birth, my mother’s profession. And what was that? an actress,—she was a woman of no common talents ; gifted, at least, with the talent of amusing the blockheads who could not amuse themselves. Well, I have shaken off my susceptibility to all this ; and I have learned, from the weakness, the inanity, the folly, the ignorance,

and the corruption of the high allies I have made, to honour and respect the humble but useful race from which I have sprung.

“ As for the Princess, the heroine of the ‘ Morning Post,’ the fourth Grace and the tenth Muse of the ‘ Court Journal,’ that is another thing altogether ! I am of La Bruyère’s opinion, that ‘ *Il vaut mieux aller à l’Opéra avec tel homme, qu’au sermon avec telle femme* ;’ a maxim which strictly applies to this foreigner, who has attained to a considerable and a mischievous influence over my wife, and has, I think, through Lady Frances’s means, wormed herself into the exclusive society of London, where, with her lost character, not even her letters from the *chefs* of foreign cabinets would have placed her. Her applying to you for my mother’s picture is but one of her traits of intrigue, originating in a desire to mortify me, because I have refused to be introduced to her, or to give her admission into my house. I hate these *femmes affairées* ; these Mesdames de Prie and De Grammont ; these petticoated ministers, the worst signs of the worst epochs.

“ My wife and I had a *démêlé*, some time back, after the Opera, apropos to this Princess. I sent Lady Frances a letter, which, perhaps, I ought not to have written ; and, instead of defending herself, or giving up this person, she sent me her own picture ; a splendid drawing ; just what she was when I married her. It had also a little motto, full of fancy and of delicate reproach, which brought me all but to her feet ; when, on entering her room, I observed on the back of her chair a bird, a paroquet, which I had never seen before. This led to an explanation, and it came out that the portrait had been done only the previous day ; and by whom, think you ? Why, by the Princess ! My wife was such a d——Becky as to show her my letter ; of which, abuse of her was the foundation. Hers, then, was the drawing, hers the device, the idea !

“ But enough of her ; and now for my pecuniary affairs.

“ I have meddled so much with those of the country, that I have neglected my own most foolishly. I am going down to-morrow with Harris to Mottram Hall, to muddle over accounts of twelve years’ standing, and put things in a better train. As for my health, Horace, I am dying. I don’t in the least mind what the physicians say, nor even what you think : I have that within, which passes their and your skill. The sources of life, I feel, are dried up within me :

nothing touches, nothing interests, me. The *cui bono* of all follows me like a shadow. Music and painting, once the charm of my existence, have lost their spell. I am inert, listless, dissatisfied ; with a perpetual weight on my spirits, and a prostration of will, that neither permits me to pursue any one object, nor to rest contented and tranquil in my nullity. I am feverish and restless by night, and my appetite is as wholly gone as my relish for things more intellectual. My temper, too, is become irritable ; and I am annoyed by trifles, till I am vexed and mortified at my own susceptibility. This cannot long go on.

“ Your allusion to one now no more was, I am sure, well meant ; so is the operation which strikes the knife into a deep-seated gangrene : but it requires considerable firmness of nerve to make the incision !

“ It was, however, more ill (or well) timed than you had reason to suppose. The image of that creature has recently recurred to my imagination, as I saw her first at my father’s, on my arrival from Oxford for my first vacation. She was singing at her easel, and copying my mother’s picture by Romney. She was dressed in that fantastic Polish dress, which my mother’s always theatrical taste compelled her to assume. What a perfect incarnation of all that is beautiful in form, with all that is bright in moral combination ! Then, her quick apprehension of external forms, and her mystic power of reproducing them ! her faculty of high resolve, under the government of high motives ! What a sublime, what a privileged specimen of humanity ! Well, it is scarcely five days since I saw this being, this once beautiful shrine of talents and acquirements so superior ; and where do you think ? On the bed of penurious, public charity ; a corpse in a workhouse ; indebted to benevolent but mistaken piety for the last acts of compassionate sympathy !

“ My mother and myself, as you well know, thought that this last scene of a heart-breaking tragedy had been completed fourteen years ago. We had been told so, and believed it. We had not time then to inquire very deeply, for it was my wedding-week. ‘ Some natural tears we shed, but dried them soon ;’ and I went with my noble and beautiful bride to Italy. My mother died in my absence, and— But why this to you ? The bitter recollections this event left behind it, were added to the higher causes which threw me into public life. But she whom we had driven to this destiny did not *then*

die ; she lived to suffer and to struggle on , without making one application to her near and wealthy kindred, and to die at last, and almost in my presence, in the workhouse of——! I cannot go on. ”

* * * * *

Sir Frederick Mottram flung down his pen, and throwing himself back in his chair, pressed his clenched hands on his aching brow, and yielded his whole being up to that torrent of uneasy sensation, to which disease of mind and of body alike contributed their evil influence. It was a splendid summer's evening, and the only silent hour which London knows at that season of pleasure and of bustle—the London dinner-hour. Lady Frances had not returned from a *déjeûné dînatoire*, announced three weeks before, and given by Lord Alfred in honour of the Princess of Schaffenhau- sen, whose arrival in London from a tour had that morning glit- tered in all the papers.

Sir Frederick had himself left the House of Commons early, for the purpose of transacting some business preparatory to his leaving town the next day ; but he had employed the interval in answering his friend's letter, a task to which he brought an aggra- vated feeling of remorse conjured up by its allusions. He was still busied in the indulgence of bitter recollections, when the study-door slowly opened, and Larry Fegan again stood, as he had done some weeks before, in the opening. It was, however, no longer the helper of the helper—the rough, ragged, and forlorn creature, whose appear- ance was at once so farcical and so astounding : it was the head groom of Sir Frederick's establishment, a handsome, showy, and well-dressed *palefrenier*, as ever shared the admiration of the Sunday promenaders of the Park with the distinguished master he followed.

“ Well, sir ! ” said Sir Frederick, starting as from an uneasy dream.

“ I big your pardon, Sir Frederick, intirely, and didn't know your honor was in it, sir. I only came to take the liberty of laving a frank for my mother, to be freed at your honor's leisure. ‘ Mistress Betty Burke,’ sir, ‘ alias Fegan, Shanballymac, county Kerry—to be lift till called for—care of Mr. Owen Geraghty, Post Office.’ ”

“ I cannot remember all this,” said Sir Frederick, impatiently ; “ write the address, and leave your letter.”

“ I shall, sir, of coorse,” replied Fegan, retiring to the door, and

yet pausing at the threshold with a look which indicated that his Irish ingenuity had made the avowed pretext of his intrusion but the *avant-courrier* to something that remained behind. He paused, picked up a book that had fallen from the shelves, and asked if he should order lights. A sharp "No" again drove him to the door, which he half closed; but, advancing once more to the table, Sir Frederick drew up, and asked—

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing in life, plaze your honor," was the reply, "only a taste of a note, Sir Frederick, I left for you here on your teeble. I was mounted on the blood mare, after coming in with your honor from the Park to-day, and waiting for orders in regard of going to the House, sir, before I put up the mare, when she said to me, says she, 'The porter has refused to take my note to Sir Frederick,' says she."

"Who?—what she?" was asked impatiently.

"Th' ould Sister of Charity, Sir Frederick; you know yourself, sir, of coorse."

Larry Fegan paused; but there was a humorous significance in his face which indicated that more was meant than spoken.

"So, plaze your honor," he continued, "I tuck the liberty of bringing the note myself, for charity's sweet sake, and left it here, sir, under this bit of green marvel, sir, with the little dumb blackamoor on it."

As he spoke, he raised a beautiful *presse-papier* with a bronze figure of Silence. Sir Frederick snatched up the note, and Fegan retreated to the door, fixing his eyes on his master with a gaze of intense curiosity. Sir Frederick read:

"At the desire of Sir Frederick Mottram, the person who met him at the workhouse of — has called twice in Carlton-terrace, but was not admitted. Should Sir Frederick have any inquiries to make of her, she will be happy to reply to the uttermost of her ability; but she leaves London at an early hour to-morrow, on professional avocations. She will receive any order left before midnight with the porter of the chapel of the — Embassy, directed to Madame Mortier."

During the rapid perusal of this note, Lawrence Fegan was slowly drawing the door after him.

“ Stay ! ” said Sir Frederick.

Fegan shut the door with alacrity, and drew up.

“ Get your hat, and return. ”

Fegan was back before his master had concluded the following lines :—

“ MADAM,—I trust you will allow me to apologize *de vive voix*, for the impertinence or mistake of my porter. I shall remain at home for the rest of this evening, and shall be flattered by the honour of a visit. The person who will deliver this (an Irish Catholic) will be in attendance to admit you.

“ I have the honour to be, etc. etc.

“ F. MOTTRAM. ”

Fegan accepted his commission with an air of confidential importance, which showed that intrigue was an ingredient of his temperament; and Sir Frederick returned once more to the letter he had left unfinished, when interrupted by his groom : he added the following postscript :—

“ A little incident has occurred, which obliges me to conclude thus abruptly. I have much to say to you, dear Horace; but it must be under the old elms of Mottram Hall. Till then, and ever,
vale et me ama!

“ F. M. ”

Fegan, for whose return Sir Frederick had waited with impatience, at length arrived, bringing only a receipt for his own billet. He was desired to remain in waiting in the hall; where, with Mr. Jennings, the new porter's permission, he seated himself at the desk. Taking from his pocket the awkwardly-folded sheet prepared for his master's frank, he began to write that letter, which at first had only been thought of as an excuse for following up his effort to procure the Sister of Charity the means of applying to Sir Frederick. Whether her *billet* was one of love or of religion, Fegan knew not; but he was equally ready for either mission. The results of his epistolary *verve* are subjoined.

“ TO MRS. ELIZABETH FEGAN, ALIAS BURKE, SHANBALLYMAC,
COUNTY KERRY.

“ ONERED MOTHER,—I writ ye a long letter by Jimmy Howlan, who was going to the leeks from Brissels, with his furrin master—and wouldn’t care if myself was in it; th’ iday of ould Ireland just hanging about my neck like a milestone; though the greatest of luck has come upon me since thin, mother dear; and I no more thinking of it, surely, than the child unborn. And well, ma’am, what would yez be after thinking if it’s own body groom I am to the Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Mottrum, barynite, and minister of steet, and privy-counsellor to the King—O! divil a less, ma’am: and I thought it the greatest of honors to be his own little boy behind the cab, and breaking my arrum—God bless the mark! Och! then, mother dear, I wisht you were after seeing me, this blessed day, ’bove all the days o’ the year, mounted on an elegant blood mare the Knight of Kerry might be proud to ride, and I in my bran new livery shuit, that is no livery at all, I’m proud to say; but just sich a coat as the first gintleman in the land needn’t be ashamed to wear: to say nothing of a new carline, * and neither band nor bow, so that it’s what I might pass for a raal gintleman bred and born all over th’ universal world; which, mother dear, you know I am, if every one had his jew. And the masther, the Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick, riding afore me, down to the House, and up the Park, to th’intire amazement of the out-of-dur servants, including Mr. Saunders, the head coachman, a raal buckeen, keeping company with the best in the land at the races and other resorts.

“ Mother dear, I’ll send you a sovrin in gould, and an iligant shawl, by the first opportunity; and was thinking that when I’d be after taking my second quarter—and has twenty guineas a-year, ma’am, with clouths, boots, and buckskins—(for the first will go to pay my trifle of dits;) and sure, it’s in regard of being so long out of pleece, and other raisons afore-mintioned in my last. Och hone! but I was in a poor wey thin; but don’t be graving now, for it’s all over, like the fair of Athy: and was advised by th’ under coachman, a dacent Dublin boy, to presint a petition to Sir Frederick, and tell him how I had fell into throuble, and grew up big, bare, and nee-

* Hat:—quære, why so called in Ireland?

ked ; but had a spurrit above it, of coorse, as well becomed me : and manetime was doing a turn about the place, in th' offices and the steeble-yard ; and had my bit and my sup, and my rag ; and Larry here, and Larry there, and doing a turn for the housemaids one day, in regard of the dustings and the pope's-heads ; and helping the helper on another ; and hiding in the hay-loft, from Mr. Saunders, who hates the *Hirish*, bad luck to him ! worse nor pison : and th' hall porther, who isn't the boy to throw a drop over his shoulder, nor stand by looking at other people dhrinking ; and I put into his aisy-cheer, night afther night ; and not a christhian in the house, bad or good, only myself, and the maids, and the sick futman in the garret, and nobody to look after him nor wet his lips but myself.

“ Well, the divil sich ballyboraging and rollicking ever ye seed as is going on here from morning till night ; and my Leedy and Sir Frederick knowing no more about it nor the child unborn : and you'd be afther taking th' house-steward for a bishop, and the grooms of the cheembers for the protestant ministers of Shanballymac ; they looking as stately, ma'am, and as high, as the rock of Cashel, in black clouths, and white cambrick pocket-handkerchiefs. And this is the way, mother dear, I got into place, opening the hall-door for the maisther in the middle of the night, and the blessed sun shining, and other things, which it doesn't behove me to be afther talking about ; so mum's the word.

“ So now I'm his honor's own groom, and grown as fat as a fool, ma'am ; having lots to ate, nothing to do, and plenty to help me. So, the place shooting me intirely, I have got my hair cut in the new London fashion, with an helper under me, and goes to Ashley's, and begs my duty to Father Murphy, for the great peins he tuck with my edication—and no thanks to Miss Grimly's Protestant Oxillery Bible Sunday-school : and till him, if ye plaze, that I means to take up, and look to my duty, and takes the liberty of sending him a snuff-box, which Jeemes Howlan tells me was blessed by the Pope of Room, with the other bastes, on St. Anthony's day ; and gave him a bran new Culgee handkerchief for it ; with which, including the sovrin and the shawl, I remain, onered mother,

“ Your own dear and dutiful son,
till further notice by post or otherwise, your affectionate

“ LAWRENCE FEGAN.”

While Fegan was thus amusing himself by the simple but not un-studied expression of his filial feelings, the grooms of the chamber were hurrying to their posts, lamps and lustres were lighting, and notes of various preparation were sounding in the hitherto silent mansion. A select party was expected to return with Lady Frances, to tea and a *grillé*, from a fête at Norwood.

Meantime, Sir Frederick was waiting in anxious impatience for the arrival of *his* invited guest : he considered his acceptance of her proposed visit as a species of tribute to the memory of one, whom conscience or vanity made him believe he had hurried to an untimely grave ; and he sought in vain to quell his perturbation and appease his restlessness by the details of business.

The clock had struck eleven, when Lady Frances's return was announced by the roll of carriages, and by much noise and laughing, as she passed with her party up stairs. Other carriages and other guests succeeded. Sir Frederick rang his bell ; but before the footman could appear, the officious Fegan was at the door.

" She isn't come, plaze your honor, or I lets your honor know, of coorse, " he said, significantly.

" Send William to me, " was the answer, " and tell the second coachman to have horses at the door at five in the morning. You may then go to bed : I have no farther occasion for you. "

Fegan retired, with his customary " Of coorse, sir ; " which, however, was not in perfect keeping with the expression of mortified disappointment that sat upon his countenance.

When William appeared, his answer to his master's inquiries was, that " her ladyship had a very small party at tea. "

Midnight arrived, and Sir Frederick dismissed all expectation of his devout visitant. He was almost relieved by the disappointment. He had a few words to say to Lady Frances before leaving town, relative to his son ; and he resolved, after a slight struggle with his feelings, to join her party for a few minutes. He was just passing into the hall, with this intention, as a chair entered it. A lady in black, who had more the air of a Venetian mask, than of the guest of an English drawing-room, stepped out. The thought that this might be his expected visitant crossed him ; and he would have returned to his study, but a line of servants cut off his retreat. The footmen in the inner hall gave her name to the groom of the cham-

bers on the landing-place; and the title of the Princess of Schaffhausen resounded from chamber to chamber, as she passed through the suite of rooms to Lady Frances's boudoir.

Sir Frederick stood for a moment in angry astonishment. Lady Frances had solemnly promised not to see the Princess again, during her stay in England; had assured him that she had taken her final leave of Carlton-terrace; and yet she was now again under his roof; admitted into his wife's most intimate society; and, to judge by her appearance, entering his doors, if not incognito, at least with the view of escaping identification, should chance throw him, where choice never could, into his wife's society.

His feelings were outraged, his pride wounded, his humour goaded to its uttermost bitterness; and he resolved on holding no further terms with one whose duplicity, contempt for his wishes, and indifference to his injunctions and opinion, had passed the bounds of all sufferance. Yet she was in the midst of her kindred, and surrounded by admirers; while he, an alien in his own adopted circle, in his own house, amidst a host of acquaintance, had not one friend. A sense of this desolation aggravated every other emotion, and he advanced, through the beautiful and half-lighted rooms, with a haggard look and disturbed air, that aroused the *tête-à-tête* languor of the occupants of Lady Frances's boudoir.

These were Lord Allington and Mrs. St. Leger. The former stared, but coolly kept his seat: the latter sprang forward to an inner room, plainly to anticipate his arrival. There was an attempt to shut the door; but he burst in. His appearance was momentary, but of strange effect. Between his entrance at one door, and his departure through another, scarcely a minute elapsed; though it had sufficed to embarrass and disconcert the idle and inconsiderate group which occupied the apartment.

The company were gathered round a species of gambling-table, fitted up in a chamber dedicated exclusively to the arts. The gamesters were already worn out by the long pursuit of their morning's amusements; and even the excitements of a novel species of dissipation failed to engage them. But Sir Frederick's transit put an abrupt termination to the amusements: carriages were ordered, the guests departed, the lights were extinguished, and silence again reigned in the gorgeous but dreary mansion.

The scene which had occurred had been so rapidly enacted, that none but the principal actress was capable of calculating its consequences or appreciating its details. Foolish, frivolous, and inconsequent as Lady Frances might be, she trembled for the results as they affected her own plans and pleasures; though less alive to their influence on her character and her position with her husband: and in her habit of relying upon others, or the consciousness of her own want of resource, she threw off one of those wordy epistles, the fac-similes of her own incoherent and disorderly mind.

“ TO THE MARCHIONESS OF MONTRESSOR.

“ Carlton-terrace.

“ DEAREST GEORGINA,—Come to me, or send me Lord Montressor, as soon as possible. I have had another blow-up with Sir Frederick, worse than the Opera scene. I really think he is mad. Good Heavens! how happy you are! Aubrey adoring you as a woman, and revering you as a saint: your husband confiding in you, and nobody finding fault with you.

“ I told you, Sir Frederick wanted me to set off with him to Mottram Hall; but my cards were out for a *déjeûné* at the Willows. Besides, once away, and adieu to the confederation of the Rhine! After much discussion, we came to a compromise: he to start immediately; and I to follow as soon as I could, trusting to what might turn up in the mean time.

“ Last night, however,—he being engaged, as I thought, at the House, as usual,—I returned from Alfred Montressor’s *déjeûné*, where I scarcely spoke to the Princess, who only showed herself for half an hour, and would not allow her horses to put up! Well, they all came back to tea at Carlton-terrace. It was the first night I opened the little tribune for the racing table; having ventured to move back Sir Frederick’s Venus, on the suggestion of Lord Alington, who said such odd things: for the Venus was covered with dust, poor dear! In short, the whole thing reminded me of 1829, before you grew sick and saintly, as Lord A. says.

“ Well, just as I had betted on the Jersey colours, and flung down my handful of balls, (and lost my money, *par parenthèse*,) who

should appear at the door but Sir Frederick ! For the last six years, I never knew him join my parties after coming from the House. The worst of it was (and, by all that's sacred, accidentally) the Princess had dropped in ; and I must say, not more unexpectedly than unwished for, and quite contrary to our agreement : for, only that I want her for the service of the Confederation this summer, I should certainly have cut her ; she is so very severe and despotic. However, she drew her lace mantilla over her face (you know her way) as soon as ever the ghost of Banquo appeared.

“ The first thing that struck my husband, was the displaced Venus (his Canova). In moving her out of the way, Alfred Montessor had broken her nose, which he had fastened on with sealing-wax. Little Levison of the Guards had put his cap upon her head, Claude had corked *moustaches*, and Mrs. St. Leger rolled her black cashmir over the bust. You never saw such a wounded hussar ! It was *à mourir* ! We shouted laughing ; and this brought on a romping match ; and then, the *causeuse* was upset, and the cushions were all about the floor ; when, lo ! Sir Frederick started in, overthrew the racing-table, and, seizing Claude's arm, asked him in a voice half suffocated with rage—

“ Is this one of *your* mischievous pranks, young sir ? ”

“ At this moment Mrs. St. Leger was pushed forward by the Princess (by whom she was *soufflée* with miraculous quickness), and passing her arm through Sir Frederick's, with one of her pretty *minauderies*, looked in his face and said, ‘ No, I am the criminal ; ’ and pointing to the Venus, she added—‘ *Qui nous négligent nous perdent*, ’—for you know the picture scene has got into the caricature shops. The effect was instantaneous. Sir Frederick disengaged himself, and rushed out of the room by the draped door, behind the alcove, which opens into his own apartments.

“ Of course you understand the *mot d'énigme* ? You remember his infatuation of three years back, before Mrs. St. Leger's departure for Germany ; the diamond agraffe sent to me by Storr and Mortimer, by mistake ; his (Mottram's) capricious cut, after showing her up by his devotion in a way quite unpardonable : when once a woman is *affichée* as the favourite of a public man, there is no retreat. Private flirtations pass unnoticed ; but I never yet knew a woman completely get out of the scrape, if inscribed in the pension-list—did you ?

“ The Princess’s conduct was *impayable*; but the quickness with which the little St. Leger seized on the idea was still more clever. Lord Allington says she is, out and out, the most adroit woman in London; and that people will find out, some day, (as they did Lady Jane Trevor’s beauty,) that she is anything but a fool.

“ Well, dear, I sent them all away (the Princess had glided off before I could thank her); but I had a horrid night, and I now write to you from bed, not having yet rung for Félicité. I shall wait my sentence patiently. Men are too unreasonable! Mottram has nothing really to reproach me with; for, as for my *engouement* for my godson, that is too ridiculous! Good b’ye! I send this by Hippolyte—don’t keep him—*et aime-moi, comme je t’aime!* ”

“ F. MOTTRAM. ”

“ P.-S. Gracious Heaven! What do you think? Sir Frederick is off for the Continent!—Sailed this morning, at seven o’clock, from Tower-stairs! *Je n’en reviens pas*. Not a word, not a line! I had sent Félicité to tell Saunders that I wanted a groom to ride to my aunt Campbell’s, when she returned with word that the second groom was ill, and that the first (some strange Irish creature that Mottram has taken into special favour) had gone with his master. The travelling-chaise, packed up for Mottram Hall, as was supposed, had taken them to the Tower-stairs at six; and the postilion had brought back the carriage with the doors locked up, and the key kept. So, whether the chaise-boxes had been removed, and the secret drawers emptied, is unknown. The whole is a mystery!

“ His own man knows nothing about it. *He* slept out of the house, as usual, (the profligate!) after he had laid out his master’s things and heated the bath; and he did not return till nine this morning (his master not intending to go till twelve). Nobody went with Sir Frederick but his new Irish groom; a helper, observe, in the stables, the other day! and the Figaro of the hackney-coach adventure on the Opera night, as Alfred Montessor called him. All sorts of things came into my head. Can he have gone off with any one?

“ Well! there is a reprieve, at all events. I shall, I suppose, get a *protocole de mari*, as the Princess calls it, before long. In the mean time, I breathe, dear; and the breakfast at the Willows goes

on. I shall expect you : a *déjeûné* by daylight comes within your law ; and I am to let good Mrs. Medlicot hold a bazaar in the garden, for the benefit of her Timbuctoo Tract Society.—*Addio!* Once more, come to me.”

CHAPTER V.

TOWER-STAIRS.

FROM the scene, which Lady Frances had so inconsistently described, Sir Frederick Mottram had found his way to his own room, in a state of irritation, to which the antecedents of its immediate cause had powerfully contributed. A life, habitually harassing and unhealthy, had unstrung his nerves ; and the agitations, public and domestic, of the last three weeks, were now summed up in a personal insult. Annoyed, therefore, to the uttermost pitch of endurance, he flung his full length on the sofa. The atmosphere of the close-curtained room was stifling ; a lamp which burned in the adjoining bath-room, sent its rays dimly through the dense vapour of the heated water.

He lay with his face pressed on his burning hands ; and his position, like the *local*, was favourable to a painful indulgence in uneasy sensations. Dark thoughts, like stormy clouds, flitted across the surface of his mind, which, already disposed to magnify and distort every incident that had passed, was torn with regrets, self-reproach, remorse, and indignation. Its morbid functions, multiplying erroneous conceptions, exaggerated the absurd occurrences respecting the statue into premeditated ridicule, contempt, and scorn. The ruin of his hopes, his character, his affairs, swept through his distempered imagination in frightful forms, with a rush and confusion of ideas that approached the very confines of insanity.

While lying thus steeped in misery, he heard, or fancied he heard, some one stirring in his bath-room. He sprang upon his feet, and

immediately a door clapped sharply from within, as if some one had gone hastily forth. But there was still something moving and fluttering about; and on entering the inner room, he saw his wife's favourite paroquet perched above the bath. The bird, alarmed at his impatient efforts to take it prisoner, eluded for some time his grasp, and fled, repeating its silly habitual phrase of "*Aimes-tu Coco?*" At length, however, he seized it, and, in his impatient spleen, crushed, and flung it into the water. "*Aimes-tu*" gurgled once more in its throat, and then was heard no more.

Had Sir Frederick strangled the donor of the unlucky favourite, whose tones it had caught, he could not have been more confused or shocked. He felt as if he had sunk to the last point of degradation. The violence of his emotions, his gloomy imagination, led him to consider this act as little short of a crime. A revulsion took place in his whole frame; his ears tingled, the sight left his eyes, and, utterly worn out and exhausted, he sunk senseless to the ground.

How long consciousness had been suspended by physical debility, he knew not; but on recovering recollection, the daylight was already pouring through the crevices of the shutters. He arose, and threw open the windows. The morning air brought with it refreshment and restoration; and, with a mind gradually cooled down, he turned to seek his bed; when a paper caught his eye. It lay in the middle of the floor, nearly opposite to the door of the adjoining bathroom. Mechanically, and without purpose, he stooped and took it from the ground. It was addressed to himself, and written with a pencil. The contents at once seized his whole attention:—

"Up and away! You think yourself miserable; you are but ill. You think yourself aggrieved; you are but dispirited. You blame others for the results of your own conduct. Your springs of life want new tempering; your mind needs refreshment, but you will find none at Mottram Hall: you will find there old associations, and you need new impressions. Leave England, then; leave it immediately: why not to-day? Could you start with Parry to the Pole, or with Lander to the burning plains of Africa; could you plunge into the unexplored forests of America, to tread the tangled woods of the Oswega, or slumber in the branches of the hemlock-tree; it were well and best. But if you cannot visit new regions, you can seek the old ones under new circumstances. Look to regenerated

Europe; throw away the spectacles of faction, cleanse off the film of party, break the thralldom of fashion; learn to unlearn,—to feel, think, judge for yourself. Go forth to the world a man; and not that mass of habits, prejudices, morbid refinements, and factitious wants, an English aristocrat, the pupil of old schools, the support of gone-by institutions.

“I told you I would obey your call; I have done so, but your petulance brooked no delay, and I missed you in your study. I have passed through your dissipated house as a public robber might, unobserved, unmolested. My vocation is to seek the wretched, to alleviate suffering wherever I find it; in the golden saloons of the wealthy, as in the homely wards of the parish workhouse: you are miserable, and I am at my post.

“Up then and away! The morning breaks, the wind is fair, sails are unfurling, steam is rising. There is a tricoloured flag floating on the Thames; it is the flag of a regenerated people. Try the effect of transition. Give to the winds the frivolous vexations which prey on your noble mind. The word of the age is, *En avant!* he who lingers last is lost.”

Sir Frederick read and re-read this singular fragment: the identity of its author could not be mistaken. Disgusted as he was, even beyond satiety, with all that belonged to the world in which he was moving, the spirit, vagueness and mystery of the communication, the romance and enthusiasm which appeared to animate the writer, had the power of a spell. It was gracious to reflect, that some one did exist sufficiently interested in him to exert even so strange an interference; and the advice offered was in perfect accordance with the tone and temper of the moment. To embrace that advice, was at least a resolve; it *was doing something*: it removed the vacillation of purpose; it strengthened the helplessness of broken-down volition; it brightened the gloom of hopeless despondency.

The clock of the Horse-guards had now struck five; and a wild and warbling whistle, resembling the silver tones of a mountain flageolet, was rising from beneath the windows of the apartment. Some one, then, was up in the establishment. Sir Frederick listened with emotion and interest to the air, for it was one to which his mother's memory was attached. It was by the singing of that air,

that she had first won his father's affections. It was the beautiful Irish melody of 'Allein a Roon.'

To his inquiry, in a low but distinct voice, of "Who is there? who is whistling?" he was answered by Fegan.

"It's me, please your honor, of coorse, Sir Frederick, gitting riddy to attind your honor, to Mottram Hall, according to orders from Mounseer last night, sir!"

"Is there none up but you?"

"Sorrow christhian, Sir Frederick, only the house-dog, poor ould Naro here!"

"Order the post-horses immediately, and awake no one."

"I shawl, Sir Frederick. But, axing your pardon, sir, in regard of the walley, who is not at home in respect of being out"

"I shall take no one with me but you," was the answer.

The brush with which Larry Fegan was giving the last polish to his own boots, fell from his hands.

"Is it nobody but myself! to dress and undress your honor, and"

Sir Frederick had already left the window; and Larry's modest interrogatory was left unanswered. There was a rush of ambition from the heart to every pore of his extremities. The words died away on his lips as he half repeated his inquiry; and he flew to execute his commission, repeating, "Nobody but myself—confidential, servant and own man to the Right Honorable! Well, well, the devil's in you (Lord pardon me!) Larry Fegan, for luck! And wouldn't wonder to see myself house-steward, and gentleman at large, before the year's out!"

Sir Frederick Mottram had changed his dress, and was seated in his carriage as the clock struck six. He stopped but for a moment, at the packet-office in the Haymarket; and then gave his orders to the astonished Fegan, who, perched on the box in front, driving clouds of yellow dust from his gloves, his cravat pulled up to his ears, and his hat perched upon three hairs, repeated in a tone he meant to be important, his master's order, "Do you hear, my lad? Tower-steers, if you plaze, and drive aisy!"

The postilion touched his cap, flourished his whip, and galloped off. The transition was magical. The west end of the town, at that early hour, was silent and deserted, as a city swept by the

plague, or sacked by war. The mansions were barred up, the club-houses closed : even porters slept ; while ladies ceased from troubling, and pages were at rest. The worshippers in the high mosques of profligacy had made their nightly offerings of vice and folly at its altars—(health, time, fortune, peace). As the carriage passed Northumberland House, Sir Frederick sighed and closed his eyes. It was the last frontier of that world, for which he had lived ; for whose opinion he now suffered. It was the barrier of the west.

As the carriage rolled on towards the east of London, what life and activity presented themselves to view ! There, every house was open, every window bright. Every inhabitant was awake and stirring ; and industry was on the tiptoe of exertion ! Market-carts, almost poetical in their lading of fruit, herbs, and flowers, were led, some haply by the fathers of future peers, others possibly by embryo peeresses, destined to change the roses and lilies bestowed by Nature's ' sweet and cunning hand,' for the *fleurons* of heraldry and the jewelled cap of rank : for such things have been, and must be, as long as youth and beauty have their price in the great market of passion or of profligacy.

But, in this bustling field of industry and of wealth, all was not equally bright. If ' in the midst of life we are in death ' by the doom and sentence of Nature, the workings of society contribute also their share to the horrible and startling contrast. The gallows erected in front of the debtor's door of Newgate, met the eye and sickened the heart of the morbid and melancholy observer, as he passed along. One of the great tragedies of human existence—cool, dispassionate, legal murder—was about to be performed ! Crowds thickened ; avenues were densely peopled with eager spectators ; some anxious to try conclusions with fate, and to learn by experience what may be that crowning mystery which terminates the long vista of all our hopes and all our fears ; the greater number, intent only on a spectacle and a sensation.

The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, alone, took no notice of a scene, of too frequent occurrence to awaken curiosity, or to point a moral. Shopboys were cleaning windows ; fishmongers and butchers were busily occupied unloading their carts for the adjoining market ; and servant-maids were hurrying home with the comfortable and abundant breakfast of the tradesman's hungry, healthy

family. Behind this exterior, was the cell of the condemned criminal, where, stretched on the rack of unrest, he listened to the dreadful toll of the bell which anticipated, while it announced, the fate that awaited him :—there was but a wall between !

Sir Frederick Mottram, the privy-counsellor who had so often witnessed the royal ratification of such sentences, the legislator who had so often by his vote checked the step of humanity and of civilization in their march towards a purified and enlightened justice, sunk back in his carriage, overcome and dispirited. An image had effected what argument had vainly attempted ; he *felt*, what he never yet could *understand*, the vanity and the weakness of those wise saws and *ancient* instances which legalized barbarity, and sanctified selfishness with the borrowed attributes of a righteous judgment.

“ There is, I fear, something wrong in this ! ” he muttered with a sigh of deep suffering. “ This is a dreadful price to pay, even for the maintenance of order ! Life for life, was the stern law of Moses ; but life for a purse, for a toy, is hard to understand ! ”

The deep red colour of Lawrence Fegan, the flush of joy and of hope, faded to a deadly hue as *he* passed this scene of suffering. It brought him back to Ireland, to the drop of the gaol at Cork, where a near and dear friend of his own had, years ago, met his fate : such too might possibly have been his own destiny, had not want and hunger driven him to enlist as a fifer in an English regiment. His talent for whistling had probably saved him from a like ignominious death. He put the corner of his cravat to his eyes.

“ I say, master ! ” cried the postboy, addressing the dicky-box ; “ if we had been a little later, we should have seen the fun. I seed that ’ere fellow at the Fives Court, many a time ; and as fine a chap he was, as you would clap your eyes on ! ”

“ So was Pat Macdermot, ” said Larry to himself with a suffocating sob.

The carriage now rolled on through the intricacies of that grand mart of enterprise, for which the whole world presents no parallel,—the city of London properly so called. The human tide was pouring along as full and strong as though it were noonday. Cars, carts, waggons, drays and stages, thronged and obstructed the narrow streets, almost impeding all approach to the Thames, which itself

exhibits a spectacle of bustle and confusion still more imposing. The Thames, choked with its teeming vessels, floating to the metropolis the “wealth of Ormus and of Ind,” and distributing to the remotest shores the endless comforts and commodities created by British industry, exerts a moral influence on society and civilization, greater than all the blessings of its physical benefactions. It bears abroad on its tide, to all the nations and tribes of man, the products of a free press, the lights of science, the catechisms of liberty!

To the distempered imagination of Sir Frederick, the impressive scene took another and a more sombre hue. He saw only laborious, toiling, suffering humanity, contending with nature for a miserable existence, tugging at the oar of sordid gain, and wasting the brief capability of sweet sensation which lies between the cradle and the grave, to provide, when most successful, for the vices of some spendthrift heir:—to perish in lonely penury and friendlessness, if it toils in vain. He put up his glass, and, among the grove of masts, the tricoloured flag of the new Belgian kingdom caught his eye. He accepted the omen as coincident with the counsels of the mysterious letter, and gave himself up to the packet agents, who were already at his side.

When Sir Frederick descended from his carriage, he left everything, as had been the habit of his travelling life, to his servant; and suffered himself to be led through the narrow descent of the Tower-stairs, by one of those who wait there to secure the confused and ignorant passenger.

“This way, my lord—this way, sir! Ostend, sir, isn’t it? Sails in ten minutes. The Talbot, sir; the finest vessel on the station. Beautiful weather, sir; wind fair. That is our boat coming up to the stairs.”

“My servant and carriage,” muttered Sir Frederick, almost led by the arm by the agent of the packet, yet shrinking from the coarse contact, and holding to his mouth his handkerchief breathing of *eau de Cypre*, which could not exclude the stench of other *eaux* of less agreeable perfume.

“Ay, ay, sir—never mind: I’ll see all safe! We have several carriages on board already. I’ll just see you into the boat, and then be back to look after your servant. Excellent breakfasts on board, sir. What name, if you please, sir?”

“ Sir Frederick Mottram. ”

“ Your servant’s, sir ? ”

“ Lawrence Fegan. ”

“ Sir Frederick Mottram and Lawrence Fegan—Ay, ay, that will do, sir ! Now, sir, if you please, give me your arm. Hope you won’t forget the agent. ”

Sir Frederick mechanically put his hand in his pocket and gave the man half-a-crown. He seated himself in the boat ; but the boatmen still waited, on seeing another coach drive up to the gate. Sir Frederick ordered them to put off, in a manner that convinced them that they would be well paid for neglecting the new arrival.

He was already almost sea-sick. His imaginative recollection of never-failing suffering on all such previous occasions, the exhaustion incidental to want of rest and over-excitement, contributed to nauseate him to the uttermost prostration of mind and volition. On reaching, therefore, the Talbot, his only desire was to obtain a sofa and escape from the deck, which resembled a Noah’s ark, and was already encumbered with numerous vehicles. He was therefore forthwith conducted into the den called the gentlemen’s cabin, and placed on one of those hard horse-hair seats, by courtesy dignified with the appellation of a sofa.

Even before the steam-engine had given its preliminary shake to the vessel, or its paddles commenced their play, sounds and objects of disgust multiplied on every side, distressing to one whose most delicate and fastidious nerves had hitherto been spared such annoyances.

“ *Orribili favelle,
Parole di dolore, accenti d’ira
Alti e fiochi,* ”

echoed on every side ; yet he soon ceased to hear them ; for he slept, or rather fell into that agitated and disturbed doze which wearied nature forces from suffering sensation, without abating its uneasiness.

The vessel had been advertised to sail at seven, but it was now past eight, and yet the anchor was not heaved. Boat was chasing boat, filled with tardy passengers, till the deck was crowded like the black-hole of Calcutta ; but Lawrence Fegan and the carriage were not yet

arrived. The latter was on its way back, under convoy of the postilion, to its station in the coach-house on Carlton-terrace; while the former still stood, the stare and the amusement of the idle group gathered round the iron gates of the Custom-house.

There are few heads that can stand a sudden revolution of Fortune, or gaze undazzled at the flash of the bright side of her wheel. Heads far sounder and wiser than that of Lawrence Fegan have mounted and grown dizzy, under the influence of some sudden change which has raised struggling industry and hopeless and unproductive labour to places of high trust, to power, wealth, and distinction. Churchmen have never passed the ordeal unscathed. The Wolseys, the Lauds, and the Richelieus, were not proof against their dizzy elevation; and in Ireland there is a see, representing the power of the church of old times, with whose mitre a strait-waistcoat is almost proverbially associated.

The change recently undergone by the redshanked *Garlogh* of Shanballymac, (for he was one whose brand of bastardy had never been effaced in the estimation of his native village)—by the boy who had been “up the mountain,” the *échappé* of the police-station at Mallow,—the fifer of the Coldstreams,—the maimed tiger of a neglectful master,—the patient of many hospitals,—the helper of the helpers of many stables,—was, to him, what the mitre of York was to the butcher’s son, or the crowning in the Capitol to Cola di Rienzi: it had upset him!

His morning’s drive; the parting stirrup-cup presented by the postilion at the door of the Thames-street porter-house, as he gave his orders with the pedantry of new inauguration to office, had assisted to confuse the head and bewilder the spirits of the Irish Sganarelle beyond all power of composure.

“Take the carriage back quiet and aisy to Carlton-terrace,” he said, “with my respects to the under-coachman, and my love to the second house-maid, and tell her I will send her a pretty present from furren parts, if one can be had for love or money.”

“Here, sir, ish a very pretty present any lady in the land might be proud to vear,” said a long-bearded impersonation of the twelve tribes of Israel to Fegan, as the carriage drove off; and he dazzled his eyes with the display of a long and massive chain.

“It ish all pure gold, mishter—virgin gold, I declare to my God!

and only vone shovereign!—it will sell for double the monish.”

“Here ish what his honour wants more than a chain,” said one of the children of Zion, and evidently the son of him of the golden chain—“Here ish the most beautifullest new travelling cloak and cap; and here ish a real gentleman’s dress-coat, fit for any nobleman in London: I bought it of the vally-de-sham of a great lord only lasht night.”

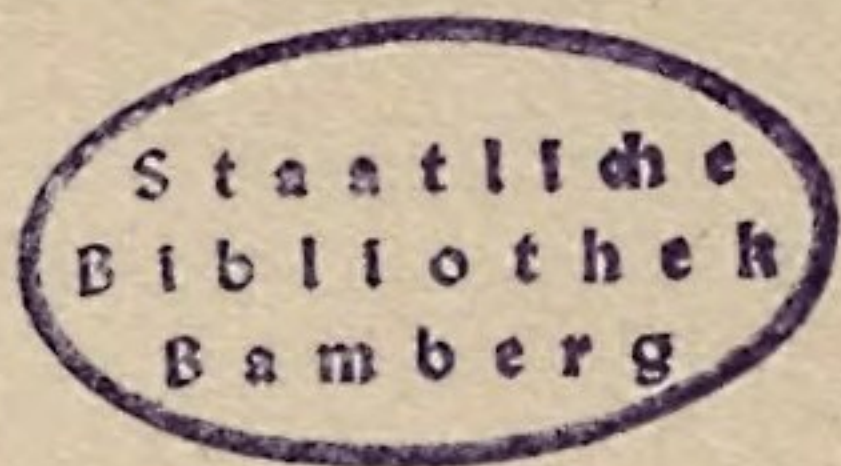
Lawrence was taken all alive, with all his weaknesses and all his vanities, his new and high aspirations, full upon him! Reason, with her specious sophistry, furnished him with ready excuses for yielding to the temptations of folly. As groom, he was provided with a livery frock, it was true; but, as *valet-de-chambre*, as ‘travelling and confidential upper man,’ the rank in which his fertile imagination had placed him, he was deficient in all the necessary paraphernalia. The idea passed, with the rapidity with which thought ever passes in an Irish head, when mounted by vanity and upset by ambition. He saw himself riding in the morning in his groom’s frock, and figuring in his own clothes in the evening, after he had dressed his master. The cloak also, with its black and silken braids and tassels, and the showy cap, with its foreign cut and its golden band, were temptations unutterable, irresistible.

The struggle between vanity and prudence was but momentary. He had four sovereigns in his pocket, being nearly the whole of a sum advanced to him for the purchase of linen by the house-steward. He looked at the *défroque* of the great lord; he examined the cloak and cap; and then, with a glance of cool, sly distrust, and with that self-satisfied Irish shrewdness which made him believe he could out-jew a Jew, he exclaimed,

“Ah! be aisy now, Mr. Shedrech, Misheek, and Abednigo! Have I time to stand bargaining about your ould clouths, and the Right Honourable Sir Frederick Mottram, my master, waiting there below, talking to the captain of the ship? Man alive! ‘time and tide stops for no man,’ as the saying is.”

Fegan cast an eye where his master was still standing, and satisfied himself that, as the steam was not up, he might delay a little longer: he remained, therefore, with the coat in his hands, while his imagination gloated upon the cloak and cap.

“Now, what would you be afther axing,” he said, “for the



whole boiling, if a man was Judy enough to be willing to take it off your hands?"

"Five guinish—and the gould band vill burn for more," said the father.

"You are giving it for nothing," cried the son, reprovingly.

"Five guineas!—five devils!" said Larry; "I think I see myself, you ould Judas Iscariot!"

He did not, however, suit the action exactly to the word; for he placed the cap on his head, with the air with which Napoleon seized the iron crown of Italy; and turning to a little mirror in the basket of a pale-faced Italian boy, who was looking on, he arranged it to his fancy. Never did any mirror of dandy royalty, from Brighton to Petersburg, reflect a more self-sufficient or more self-satisfied form. Nor was the feeling altogether without foundation: his tall, well-framed figure became the cloak; and his very Irish face well suited the *gaillardise* of his foreign cap.

"Well, thin, what will you be afther taking for the cloak and cap, without any further jawing? for the tay-kittle there will be soon boiling, and I must be off like a shot."

"Vell, sir, as God is my shuge, three shovereigns is the lowest farthing; I wouldn't take lesh from my own fader, if I vash to die for it."

"It a'n't worth the money," said Larry, doubtingly, his eye fixed on the looking-glass.

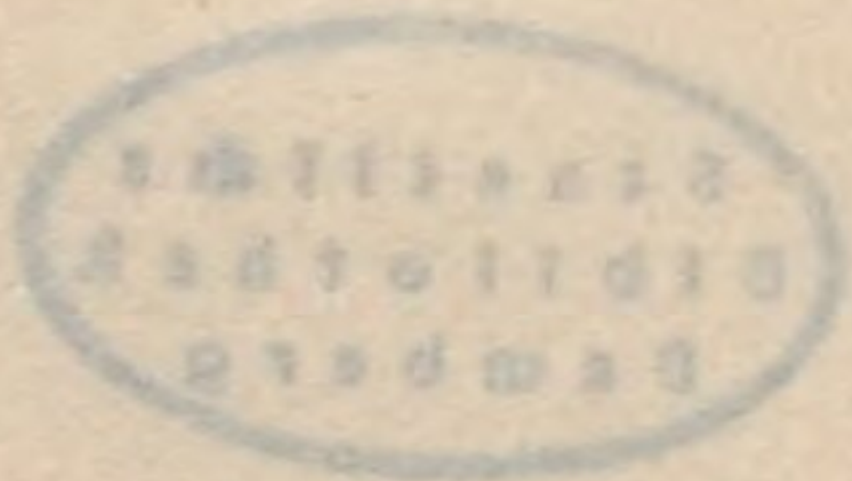
"Here 's one von't think so," replied the Jew lad, pointing to a showy carriage that bowled up to the gate: "the Irish vally-de-sham on that 'ere coach offered us more monish yesterday."

"Here 's your money," said Larry, in a hurried tone; "and let's have no more of your goshtering."

Delighted with his bargain, he was hastening away to the packet, when the Jew boy ran after him with the coat, crying,

"Misther! misther! the packetsh von't sail this half hour; dere's plenty of time; von't you buy dish beautiful coat? Look at it, sir; itsh a lovely coat! Try it; and if it don't fit you, you shall have it for nothing."

The alternative was too tempting. He looked at the coat, and then at the Jew boy: "Well, sir, I *will* thry it, just to plaze you."



He gave the cloak to the boy to hold, and addressing a well-looking loungee who stood carelessly observing the transaction, he added, " Might I be afther throubling you to hould my coat, sir, for a minute ?"

It was to little purpose that Larry laboured to invest himself with the toga of gentility; no effort could stretch it to the proportions of a far different stature from that for which it was made. Irritated by the fear of being too late in his attendance on his master, enraged at being mystified by the Jew boy (whose mirth had got the better of his cupidity), and disappointed at missing the bargain his vanity had counted upon as concluded, he flung the coat at the owner's head, and, snatching the cloak out of his hands, he burst out,

" Why, thin, ye grinning galoot ! is it a Leprahaun you 're thinking I am, or one of the good people, that you would impose on me a screed of a jerkin, that was made for some midge of a cratur like your black-muzzled self ? Give me my things, sir, if you Why, what 's gone of the young gintleman that 's houlding my coat ?"

A general laugh from the by-standers replied to the question. Fegan looked round with dismay; the ' young gentleman ' had disappeared.

The bell from the vessel tolled forth its immediate departure.

" Last boat for the Talbot, gentlemen !" cried the agent. " Now or never !"

The boat was already thronged ; but Fegan still stood, the image of consternation and despair. He had neither hat nor coat. The boat put off.

" Never mind, master," said a wherry-man, touching Larry's arm with his dripping oar ; " I 'll put you aboard before the other boat can get there. Here, give me your hand. Hot weather, sir ; but put on your cloak, all the same."

The next moment, wrapped in his cloak, his head scarcely covered by his cap, Fegan was seated in the boat. Misfortune had sobered him : his position overwhelmed him. The vessel had cast loose ; the steam, which, a moment before, had poured forth in rushing volumes, suddenly ceased ; and the paddles commenced their dinning rounds. Hurrying on board, he was obliged to double the waterman's ordinary fare ; and, fearing to encounter his

master, he skulked forward among the servants and other tenants of what is called the second cabin.

Never was there made a more unprosperous voyage between the Thames and Ostend than that now performed, save only the one in which the unseaworthy Talbot was wrecked off the Flemish coast, a few weeks afterwards. The substitution of this boat for the regular packet of the station, was one of those risks to which the British public is subjected more than the people of any other nation in Europe.

She had been the first vessel that ever had plied to Ostend on the commencement of steam navigation; and the inferior construction of her engine, no less than the wear and tear of the hulk itself, rendered her a slow and dangerous sailer. She was now, it was said, taken up to supply a sudden emergency; and her crew and appointments were as occasional as herself. The cabin was crowded to suffocation; the deck was choked with carriages; and before the ship had cleared the river, the weather, which had been squally, became decidedly foul.

Instead of fulfilling its promise of arriving that night, it was late in the following morning when the ship made its port, and gave up the ghosts of its wearied and sickened passengers, (pale, comfortless, but too happy to escape from their 'prison with the risk of being drowned') to the gaze of the loungers on the quay of Ostend.

CHAPTER VI.

OSTEND.

Letter

“ TO MESSRS. HARRIS, WILLIAMS, AND CO. LINCOLN’S INN, LONDON.

——— Hotel, Ostend.

“ Sir Frederick Mottram desires that a hundred-pound bank post-bill may be forwarded to him, at the above address, *instantly*.

“ Should Mr. Harris have left town for Mottram Hall, the person who represents him in his office is requested to open the enclosed, and act upon it immediately. ”

(*Enclosure.*)

“ Ostend, Waterloo Hotel.

“ DEAR HARRIS,—Send me, without loss of time, a letter of credit for a thousand pounds upon some house in Brussels ; (the hundred-pound post-bill, without a moment's delay.) Take the trouble of going to Carlton-terrace, and seeing Saunders. Desire him to bring me my travelling-carriage, *just as it is* : I have the keys. If he does not find me here, he is to proceed with post-horses to the Bellevue, at Brussels.

“ I am in the most infernally awkward position here that man ever was ; but have not time for particulars, as I send this by a gentleman who is just starting for England by way of Calais. The post does not leave this most melancholy place till Saturday.

“ You will receive my letter on Thursday night or Friday morning, and I hope before you start for Mottram Hall ; that is, if you have not already heard that I had left London for the Continent,—to your great surprise, of course, as to my own. A sea-voyage was necessary to my health, and has already, I think, done me good : but the benefit derived is scarcely worth the purchase.

“ I need not urge your immediate attention to this importunate request for money. I am here without a shilling, without a change of linen, or even a razor ; owing to the blunders, and perhaps drunkenness, of a new Irish servant, who sent back the carriage which took me to Tower-stairs, instead of putting it on board.

“ The fact is, I am in pledge (and so is my watch), under a suspicion of belonging to the army of English scamps, who make this miserable place a refuge from bailiffs and policemen. My servant, too, to mend the matter, is before the *juge de paix*, accused of having stolen a cloak and a cap from a courier ; and being (I know not how or why) without coat or hat, (which he lost at the moment of embarkation,) is suspected of having escaped from the Hulks at

Woolwich. The waiter is at my elbow, to take this to the gentleman who bears it ; therefore I can only add, that I am,

“ Yours, etc.

“ FREDERICK MOTTRAM. ”

Letter II.

“ TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.

——— Hotel, Ostend.

“ DEAR HORACE,—If you are amazed at the date of this letter, so am I. Talk of free will and moral responsibility !——But, to the point and purpose. I wish I could have anticipated the *espionage* of the newspapers, (which throws every man’s privacy open to the vulgar gaze of the meddling world, and which, by this time, has bruited to all Europe my departure from England, with all sorts of absurd and venomous additions ;) and that it had been possible to give you an earlier account of my unpremeditated escape from that modern Babylon, London.

“ I arrived here yesterday, just in time to scrawl a few lines to my man of business, for money ; being most strangely without a shilling, actually provided with the necessaries of life by the confiding charity of strangers, and obliged to wait till Harris sends me the means of departure. Here I am, therefore, at Ostend, till the packet of Saturday arrives—except Mr. Fauche, (the British Consul, and an old Vienna friend,) should return from Brussels in the interim, where he most unfortunately is now absent. I have time enough, therefore, at my disposition, to detail all my movements and predicaments.

“ When I last wrote, it was in the hope of soon meeting you at Mottram Hall. Everything was prepared for departure on Tuesday morning ; my carriage packed, my *nécessaire*, money, books, etc. etc. all stowed in, and the horses bespoke ; and having indulged Lady Frances in her whim of giving a breakfast at the Willows, before it was sold or let, I arranged that she should follow me, and that poor Emilius should be wholly left in the hands of his doctors and preceptor. I paired off with Winterbottam, and returned from the

House earlier than usual, that I might write to you, and get through some other business: and I found *my* house a rendezvous of the elect, returning from a *déjeûné* at Norwood. Romping, carried on to the very verge of licentiousness, and high play, constituted the business of the night; and a new game, called a racing-table, (which has been recently introduced to shorten the process of ruin,) was in full activity.

“There is a pretty little apartment in the farther end of the suite, which, pedantically enough, I have called the Tribune; because it contains the two Titians, the Murillos, the Chandos Correggio, with Canova’s Venus, which he executed for me when I was in Rome. But I cannot go on! Perhaps I should have treated the whole thing as an *enfantillage*: for this association of middle-aged matrons and foolish young men is the most puerile thing imaginable;—the men, from constant frequenting such coteries, being as trivial as the women, and the women borrowing the free tone of the men.

“In aggravation of such a meeting in such a place, Master Claude Hamilton and his playfellows had mutilated and disfigured Canova’s superb work; and that female Mephistopheles, the Princess of Schaffenhausen, stood presiding over the whole mischief, in her wizard dress and veiled face, notwithstanding Lady Frances’s solemn promises to the contrary. I could not control myself. I was mad, acted like a madman; and, under the influence of I know not what spell—led by a sort of anonymous letter, counselling me to the hasty step I have taken—ordered the horses to the Tower-stairs! instead of the great north road, and embarked for Ostend.

“Here I am, then, and hope to hear from you at Brussels, through which I must pass, go where I will; but where that will be, I neither know nor care. Make no allusion, however, to the incidents I have touched on solely for your information. I want a total change and regeneration of body and mind. I have done with the past, and am without one view for the future.

“My present situation, (the last, one would think, reserved for a man with a rent-roll of twenty thousand a year,) if it was not so very provoking, would be very amusing, from its extreme absurdity. I arrived here after the most dreadful passage I ever made, and was almost carried on shore by the steward of the packet, who delivered me into the hands of I know not who: but there was music in the

man's voice, for it spoke of a bath and a bed. I plunged from one to the other, with a luxury of sensation dearly purchased, but still beyond price. I had desired the person who attended me to the hotel, to send my servant with dressing things, etc. etc. as soon as he had landed the carriage; and, waiting for him, I got from the bath to the bed, and so dropped asleep. Such a sleep! I have enjoyed none to equal it for many years; deep, dreamless, death in counterfeit! I believe I should have slept on till now, but that I was awakened by the sharp voice of a pert English waiter, to know whether I meant to travel by the *diligence* or the *treckschuyt*. I was some time awakening to a perfect recollection of my situation, and almost unconsciously answered 'Neither.'

" 'Then,' he replied rudely, 'you had better get up.'

" I *did* get up; started *sur mon séant*; ordered him to send my servant, and leave the room instantly.

" 'Servant!' he replied; 'there is no servant in the house, but the servant of the Hon. Patrick O'Reiley, who had been left by his friends with their carriage, as security for an unpaid bill.'

" 'My servant,' I said, 'is, or should be, with the carriage, if it is not yet landed.'

" The fellow grinned, and was making some impertinent reply, when a sailor-looking man bolted into the room, and asked 'if I was the gentleman who *called* himself Sir Frederick Mottram; because, if so be, the Hirishman what was aboard the Talbot was tooked up for prigging a cloak and cap, and he had sent me that note.'

" It was a dirty piece of unfolded paper, which I copy for its curiosity :—

" 'SIR FRIDERICK,—There's the greatest destruction going on, and sarious murthur, if you don't come to my pertection immai-diately. They have me up, plaze your honor, before a frinch justis of pace, that ha'n't a word of english in his mouth, no more nor a dog, and is swearing away the life o' me about a cloak I lawfully bought of a jew; and if you don't come to my help and salvation, Sir Frederick—I'm innocent as the child unborn, who is

' Your faithful servant till death,

' L. F.'

“ I desired the porter to say I would follow him immediately. He asked me for something for his trouble; but I had given all the loose money about me to the steward of the packet, and actually had not a shilling on my person. The insolent waiter grinned and left the room, and I had to dress myself in the horrid clothes I had worn on board the packet. I never in my life was reduced to such *personal* inconvenience: you know that no man has ever roughed it less. I was still dressing, when the landlord entered the room, and civilly asked me for my passport. I had none: in my impatience to be off, I had never thought of it. The landlord looked suspiciously, which added not a little to my impatient anger; and I could not refrain from a *boutade* on the sort of liberty afforded by the new revolutionary government. The fellow was muttering something about the Alien act in England and necessary precaution; but I cut him short, by desiring him to show me to the hotel of the British Consul, Mr. Fauche. As the devil would have it, he had gone that day to Brussels, and was not expected for a week. ‘What *is* to be done?’ I said.

“ ‘You must return, I fear,’ said the landlord, ‘by the first opportunity. Here is a little bill prepared by my clerk, as we unluckily want this room, which is bespoke for a gentleman from Ghent.’

“ The bill for coffee, bed, bath, etc. was under a pound; and yet I had not wherewith to discharge it. I told the man briefly the state of the case, and that I must remain in his cursed house, either till I got remittances from England, till the return of Mr. Fauche, or till some English family arrived whom I might know. The expression of the landlord’s countenance provoked me so, that—but the whole thing is too absurd.—I observed,

“ ‘As such things must rarely happen here, you may be incredulous, and——’ ”

“ ‘Oh dear, no!’ he interrupted flippantly; ‘nothing so common. Gentlemen very frequently arrive at Ostend in the same situation. We have now in the house, the Hon. Mr. O’Reiley, who was left with a carriage in bail for twenty pounds, by his father, when he was suddenly called home. There are two or three other gentlemen whom you’ll meet walking on the ramparts, and who landed here much in the same predicament.’

“ You see that I was at once put down on the list, with the Hon.

Mr. O'Reiley and the gentlemen that walk the ramparts, by Jove ! You can have no idea of my annoyance ! Only conceive a man thus circumstanced, when he really and truly is without means ; and owes his distress, not to accident, but to his own folly—or, worse still, his unmerited misfortune ! Good Heavens ! The reflection passed rapidly through my mind, and calmed me : but I could not get over the mortification that there should be nothing in my appearance, or manner, to bear witness in my favour. Oh ! how small a part of life and its vicissitudes is known to the prosperous and the rich !

“ As the man (who, after all, was perfectly justified in his caution, and was as civil as a man could be, who saw before him a scamp that had used his bed, bath, and breakfast, and had nothing to pay in return,) talked of a pledge, I pointed to my watch and seals, which lay on the table, and are worth a hundred guineas. ‘ Perhaps,’ I said, ‘ you will take charge of that for a day or two, until I can hear from London. I will write this moment, and send to Brussels to our ambassador for a passport.’

“ The man took up the watch and admired it ; looked at the seals, arms, crest, and cipher,—then at me,—but still doubtfully. It did not appear that his suspicions were removed ; and my indignation could hold no longer. I was in the very act of turning the man out of his own apartment, when my servant burst into it, followed by a fashionably-dressed but vulgarish young man.

“ Of the handsome, smart (rather too smart) groom, who left London with me the day before, there was not a trace. Fegan was in his shirt-sleeves ; his face smeared and smoked with the grime of the steam-den, where he had been thrust when suspected of the robbery—for he was found on board dressed in a cloak and cap belonging to a courier, both of which had been stolen from Thomas's Hotel a day or two before. All that could be seen of poor Fegan's complexion bore the green and yellow tint of sea-sickness. His features were distorted by rage, and his black head was powdered with ashes. He rushed abruptly into the room, pushing aside the landlord ; whose respect for the master could not have been much increased by the appearance of the man.

“ ‘ I ax your honor's pardon, Sir Frederick,’ he said, ‘ for appearing before you, sir, like a poor Connaught spalpeen begging back his way home afther a bad harvest. But I just wish you to jidge, sir,

the intire murthur and destruction those villians and Tories have brought on me; robbing me on the quays of my hat and livery-coat, and making me a receiver of stolen goods, and hanging me outright: to say nothing of the plunder, and the shame, and the intire disgreece: and if it warn't for a greet Irish nobleman and his Leedy and the Dochter here—long life to them! it's hung up I'd be, this day, in a furren land, like the poor boy that was stepping out on the gallows we left behind us in London. And plaze your honor, in regard of the cloak and cap, if I was dying this day, before God and his blessed Mother, and the Dochter here, I bought them honestly,—and the pride of me who has nothing but character and my honor, Sir Frederick—oh musha, musha!’

“Here poor Fegan’s convulsive emotion absolutely stifled him; and the stranger, smiling, and putting him gently on one side, said—‘There, that’s my good fellow! go and wash yourself:’ and turning to the landlord, he added—‘Let this poor man want nothing; Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty, and myself, are answerable for him. I believe I have the honour of addressing Sir Frederick Mottram? I am Doctor Rodolf de Burgo, travelling with my friends Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty. The name cannot be unknown to you. Too happy if we can be of service;—am desired to say so, on the part of my friends. Understand the whole thing, sir, from what your servant has said:—hurry of departure; mistake of the carriage, and all that. Had the pleasure of hearing you speak in the House the night before we left London; in great force. Went there with my friend Spring Rice. As to your servant, you must see the thing at once; it was simply this: Jewed by a Jew; bought stolen goods; taken up. Fortunately I was passing at the time and heard the row. My compatriot *was* rather obstreperous. Three gendarmes could hardly keep him down. He recognized me, poor fellow! I knew him when he lived with my friend Jack Aubrey de Vere. I was then surgeon of the regiment. But all is settled. The courier is off to Brussels, satisfied to get back his things. His name was embroidered in the inside of the cloak. I stepped forward in poor Paddy’s behalf. And so there the matter ends. Can I be of further service?’

“Although I did not altogether like the manner and *aboard* of this flashy, but rather clever-looking person, I availed myself of the

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The family of the Dogherties, like so many other of the primeval tanists of Ireland, had, in the process of time, of native anarchy, and of foreign oppression, fallen from their high estate; and while some remained at home to submit in subtile servility to the intruders who had displaced them, others, of a more unbending spirit, had emigrated to foreign lands in search of independence, of adventure, or of bread.

The latter had been the fortune of General Sir Shane O'Dogherty, a favourite in the court of the Empress Maria Theresa. He had fought the battles of despotism, wherever liberty had raised its standard, during the course of sixty years; and having recently died in a garret at Vienna, covered with scars and decorated with orders, was buried by the charity of an Irish priest, and was forgotten by all save a second cousin twice removed, who claimed the reversion of the title, and had long watched, by every attainable means, the decline of its venerable and valiant possessor. This cousin was Sir Ignatius Dogherty, now of Shanballymac House, in the county of Kerry.

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with hostile phalanxes, but at present exhibiting on summer evenings a scene of as much peace and loveliness as ever was set off by the cloudless sunshine of a summer's sky.

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To the right of Lady Dogherty sat Sir Ignatius. If not the last of 'the rakes of Mallow,' (those jolly sporting Irishmen who gave

accident, to explain to him my position. Nothing could surpass his civility. He and Sir Ignatius Dogherty, whom I have not yet seen, have answered for everything. The Doctor has given Fegan a coat of his own; and, strange to say, now that he is dressed in it, he resembles the Doctor amazingly. I, for my part, am indebted for much accommodation to these good-natured people; and I have since purchased a handsome *nécessaire de toilette*, with money advanced by the landlord on my watch. Being now satisfied that I am a man of fortune, an M.P. etc. etc., he is covered with shame and remorse, and wanted to return the pledge, which I refused.

“ My new acquaintance have asked me to dine, and sent their cards and note of invitation in form; but I have declined. They remain here another day, on account of the lady’s health, who is an invalid; but I don’t want to add to the weight of the obligation, or to make an intimacy which may turn out, in the long-run, to be excessively *à charge*. The landlord has undertaken to provide me linen, and procure Fegan a new livery. I must stay here for my remittance; and am just as well at Ostend as anywhere else. The tranquil solitude of these moss-grown streets, the sea, the air, the few simple Flemish faces passing my window, are all novelties. All the horrid English crew of the packet are off, in coach or boat, and have left the world of Ostend to silence and to me.

“ I shall write to you again from this, when I have made up my mind to something certain, so as to be able to give you an address. In the mean time, as ever, Yours,

“ F. MOTTRAM.”

“ P.-S. I fancy that no spark of the ‘glorious four days’ has fallen upon the remote region of Ostend. I don’t think that they have the least suspicion that they have changed kings and governments. It is, very literally, the fable of the Frogs. How I nauseate the idea of Brussels!—*et pour cause*. I shall merely await my carriage there. The route from this place by Bruges and Ghent is new to me. In returning from Brussels, in Twenty-nine, we took the Calais road, which, I remember, was dreary and monotonous. Most probably I shall push on to the north of Germany. I have a carriage building at Frankfort—suppose I go for it? I really have no more important object in view, go where I may. Once more farewell,

“ F. M.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOGHERTIES.

THE particular family of the human race from which the Milesian Irish derive their descent, and the period of their arrival in Ireland, are points which have been much and long disputed. The learning, the patriotism, the piety, and the pedantry of the country, have for a thousand years been employed unavailingly on the subject; and in that vast lapse of time, the Irish have suffered the indignity of seeing their *penates* shifted from Spain to France, to England—and, in spite of Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan, to Scotland. If Giraldus Cambrensis, Nennius, Keating, O'Halloran, and Vallancey, with their various disciples, have fought the battle on the bloodless but obstinate field of controversy with doubtful result, Sir William Betham, the most recent of Irish antiquaries, has not been deterred from the attempt to set the matter at rest (if such questions can ever be set at rest); and the evidence he has brought to establish that the Milesians are part and parcel of the great Gallo-British hive, which was known to Cæsar by the appellation of Celts, if not absolutely convincing, is of great weight and credibility.

“The Celts,” says Cæsar, “are handsome in their appearance, but their voices are disagreeable.” (So would the Irish accent of the present day, perhaps, appear to the refined Italian ear of some modern Cæsar.) “In their conversation they are brief and enigmatical [evasive], and they generally adopt mere allusion. They speak extravagantly when setting forth their own merits; but with contempt when they touch on the merits of others. They are proud, vain, and fond of exaggeration; but of acute understanding, and apt to learn.”

Whoever has lived much in Ireland, must perceive in this ancient portraiture of the Celts a strong resemblance to some of her sons,—the living representatives of a race which, unchanged and unchan-

geable, still flows through the general population, like a stream of fresh water through the briny sea. It is unnecessary for the modern historian to alter a trait, to add a tint, or to deface a lineament. The red Dane, the fair Anglo-Norman, the small-eyed, canny Scotch undertaker, the English adventurer, all distinctly marked by their own several physical peculiarities, make way for the impetuous course of the Celt, who, in the battle-field abroad, in the row at home, in the cell of monkish learning, or in the cabinet of astute politics, (subtile but bold, sly but daring,) is still the same as when he first issued from the 'great foundery of creation.' There he is, as Cæsar has depicted his ancestors in Gaul, and as Henry the Second found them in Ireland.

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To the right of Lady Dogherty sat Sir Ignatius. If not the last of 'the rakes of Mallow,' (those jolly sporting Irishmen who gave

their name to the merriest melody in Irish music,) he might have served for a tolerable type of that now extinct order. His jacket was bottle-green; his buttons of the brightest brass; his vest was variegated as the garment of Benjamin. His *truis*, (to use an old Irish name for an habiliment which delights in no more recent appellation at all suited to the *molles auriculæ* of modern ton,) his *truis* were buckskin, and his boots topped. His hat, if not too small for his head, was so worn as scarcely to cover it; and his cravat, by its voluminous folds, rivalled that of Banagher,—an Irish beau of proverbial celebrity, of whom it is traditionally reported, that his band contained “ nine stone of starch ! ”

Sir Ignatius leaned as he sat on a very curiously knotted stick, a middle term between the English club and the Irish shilelagh; and rested a very rubicund cheek upon a still redder hand. Lawrence Fegan stood in waiting behind Sir Ignatius with a look of deference and pride; and all were listening to the discourse of an eloquent narrator, who was holding forth undisturbed and uninterrupted, except by the occasional commentaries of his admiring auditors.

This orator was Doctor Rodolf de Burgo. He stood with his finger inserted between the pages of a Guide-book; and was giving a rather detailed account of the geography, topography, and history of the town of Ostend, with the conscious air of unborrowed knowledge, and the tone and attitude of an *improvisatore*.

“ You now occupy, I may say, ” declaimed the Doctor, “ the most westerly point of Europe. ”

“ The most westerly, ” he repeated doubtingly to himself; “ that is, *le plus oriental*. ”

“ See that! ” said Sir Ignatius. “ Well, ’pon my daisy! I always thought that West Port, in county Mayo, was the most westerly point of the Uropian world: where the Marquis of Sligo lives, you know yourself, Doctor. ”

“ I said, easterly, ” said the Doctor, referring to his book.

“ Troth, ye didn’t! ” said Sir Ignatius, winking at Fegan; “ but *na boclish!* niver mind—a slip of the tongue’s no fault of the heart, as we say in Ireland. ”

“ And fine sayings there is in it, Sir Ignatius! ” said Fegan, touching his hat.

“ Sorrow finer! ” said the Baronet, “ for thim that *has* good

Irish, and isn't too conceited intirely to spake it like a man."

"Of coorse, plaze your honor," said Fegan, reddening, on the supposition that the Baronet had made a hit at what he deemed his own superlative English accent and phraseology.

"Sir Ignatius!" said his lady, angrily, "pray let the Doctor continue: no book *could* give you half the very valuable information you are now getting for nothing."

"For nothing!" sighed Sir Ignatius, (*aside*;) "two hundred a-year and travelling expinses; and she calls that nothing! Oh! marcifful Moses!"

Lady Dogherty deposited her coffee-cup on a salver, which was presented to her by Lawrence Fegan, who had constituted himself on service since he had obtained her protection.

"Mr. Fegan," said Sir Ignatius, "might I trouble you, at the same time, to get me a little drop of . . . what do you call spurits in German, Doctor?"

"Schnaps!" replied the Doctor, snappishly. "But we are now standing, as I observed, Lady D., on the extreme eastern point of Europe. For the rest, Ostend is four leagues from Bruges, three leagues from Nieuport, and twenty-two leagues from Brussels."

"I'll trouble you for small change for *that*," said Sir Ignatius.

"For what, pray?" asked the Doctor impatiently and peevishly.

"Why, for *lagues*; divel such a word iver I met in the Universal*!"

"A league means three English miles, Sir Ignatius," said the Doctor, smiling at Lady D. "The sea washes these ramparts in all seasons. Nothing can be more sublime or picturesque than the ocean-view from them!"

"Och murther!" groaned Sir Ignatius, looking up for sympathy to Fegan; "and the view from the Cove of Cork and the top of Mangerton!"

"The *écluses* are also very fine," continued the Doctor: "they serve to discharge the waters of the canal of Bruges, and to resist the incursions of the ocean."

"Why thin, 'pon my daisy!" said Sir Ignatius, "they're no great things, no more nor the mare that ran for the whisky, compared to the locks of the Grand Canal, or the Royal, of Dublin. If you seed

* *Id est*, "Universal Spelling-book."

the thirteenth lock, for instance, or Hazel Hatch, or Puckstown in the county Kildare, it 's little you'd think of thim *make believes*, with their Frinch name."

"I suppose they are of modern invention?" said Lady Dogherty.

"No," said the Doctor; "they were built so far back as 1660."

"When was that?" asked Sir Ignatius, yawning.

"This port as you now see it," continued the Doctor with the emphasis of a cicerone, and overlooking or disregarding the embarrassing question of his patron, "is a monument of Joseph the Second."

"Who was Joseph?" asked the persevering Sir Ignatius, pertinaciously.

"The Emperor of Germany," said the Doctor, petulantly.

"Are we in Germany now, Doctor?" asked Sir Ignatius.

"If you will stand where I am, Lady Dogherty," continued the Doctor, "and make use of this telescope, you will perceive that the coast of Ostend forms a straight line. The entrance of the basin is difficult, and the vessels are obliged to pass between two jetties by an opening so narrow, that the attempt is dangerous when the wind is contrary."

"May the divel fly away with them for jetties!" said Sir Ignatius with ill humour; "for it is to *thim* we owe that bumping and thumping, and throwing up the lives out of us—saving your prisince, my lady!—with that *say*-sickness that's left me as wake as a child."

"Oh musha! no wonder," exclaimed Fegan, with a deep sigh.

"Where you see the flag, Lady D., is the point of embarkation for England," observed Doctor de Burgo.

"I wouldnt' care, thin, if I was embarking back this blessed evining," said Sir Ignatius, under the peevish reaction of his rum punch and glass of schnaps, addressing himself to Fegan: "and if I thought I could get by long say from this to Shannon harbour, I wouldn't desire better than to lave this ould raggamuffin place with the first fair wind!"

"It would be great luck, Sir Ignatius; for Ostend is a poor pleece surely, sir," said Larry, touching his hat, and making a grimace of contempt; "and of coorse no ways compayrable to the Bee of Dublin."

"There is something mighty touching in the ruined greatness

of this fine ancient old Flemish town," said Lady Dogherty.

"I wish the Doctor would give us a Flemish account of it," said Sir Ignatius; "for I am sick of having nothing to do in it, and nobody to help me."

"It is a town of great historical interest," said the Doctor. "It was long a place of great importance. In 1585, it was regularly fortified by the Prince of Orange."

"The Prince of Orange!" repeated Sir Ignatius, starting. "See that!—Well, the world is not wide enough for ould Nosey, any way! What the divel brought him here!"

"But Ostend is most celebrated for the famous siege which the Dutch sustained in it against the Archduke Albert. It lasted three years and three months. The Duke, who fought gallantly, was accompanied by Isabella, the Infant of Spain."

"Poor little dear!" yawned drowsily Sir Ignatius: "they had better have left her in her cradle—poor child!"

"When the Princess advanced to the spot most exposed to the fire," continued the Doctor, too much occupied in showing off to hear what was said, "she wore a cuirass."

"She did right," muttered Sir Ignatius; "and queer enough it must have been to see her in it—poor babby!"

"But when we get to Brussels, Lady D., you must read the history of Ostend. I will draw you up a little abridgment of the Low Countries. Suffice it for the present to say, that the Spanish general Spinola took the town in 1604; that the Dutch lost, by fire, sword, and pestilence, thirty thousand men; that the besiegers fired 150,000 *coups de canon*; and that the city did not capitulate till it was reduced to a heap of ruins."

"Divel mend it!" exclaimed Sir Ignatius, as he dropped off into a doze, heartily sick of the history of Ostend; while Lawrence Fegan listened with increasing attention: the Doctor proceeded—

"The Emperor Charles the Sixth established at Ostend the famous Company for trading with India, which excited so much jealousy in the Dutch and English merchants. In consequence of this rivalry, it was regulated at Ostend in 1751,—no, at Vienna," (here the Doctor flung an eye on his book,) "that the Company should cease their operations; and, in one year, two thousand five hundred inhabitants quitted the city for ever!"

A loud snore from Sir Ignatius accused his indifference to the narration, and suspended its progress.

“What a miraculous memory you have, Doctor!” said Lady Dogherty. “Nothing escapes you! Your friend Lady Dixon used to say that you were a walking library. How often have we talked of you in our walks by moonlight! She calls you the most talented creature the world ever saw, not excepting her friend Byron, or Tommy Moore; for she knew them both intimately, and can show their writing in her album.”

“Poor Lady Dixon was partial,” said the doctor, with a conceited and satisfied smile,—“too, too partial.”

Lady Dogherty looked down, and sighed; after a short pause, she added, “She was not insensible to genius. The day I left Brighton she showed me your beautiful lines on the orange-tree (as good as anything Byron ever wrote), with the happy allusion to that tree bearing at once fruit and flowers. Did you see the lines she wrote underneath?—

‘Oh! woman’s heart was made for minstrel’s hands alone;
By other hands when touch’d, it yields not half its tone.’”

“And are *you* of that opinion, Lady Dogherty?” asked the doctor, in a low insinuating tone.

‘Silence that spoke, and eloquence of eyes,’ filled up the pause; which was shortly after interrupted by Fegan, who aroused Sir Ignatius, by gently touching his shoulder, and observing,

“I ax your pardon, Sir Ignatius; but here’s my master, the Right Hon. Sir Frederick, coming up towards us.”

Sir Ignatius started and rubbed his eyes. The doctor opened the book he held in his hands, and fell to peruse it with intense abstraction; while Lady Dogherty settled her frills and her flowers with a minute attention to effect.

The elegant form, the easy *laissez aller* air, and peculiar character of countenance of Sir Frederick Mottram, would, all over travelled Europe, have stamped him a member of the English aristocratic caste; while the deep melancholy and languid look spread over his face, would, by foreign prejudice, have been ascribed to English *morgue*: by romance, (such romance as Lady Dogherty’s,) it was

translated into the highest touch of sentimental refinement. One only incongruity disturbed the perfection and unity of his appearance, and that was the disproportionate height of his shirt-collar, which rose above his ears, and the profusion of linen that descended even to the extremity of his fingers. He passed on, with a loitering step and folded arms, the observed of all observers,—himself observing nothing, and apparently lost in deep abstraction and moody thoughts.

“Who is he at all? what is he?” asked Sir Ignatius, roused into a perfect ‘waking consciousness’ by his lady’s nudges.

“It is Sir Frederick Mottram,” said Lady Dogherty, “our new friend.”

“Why, thin, a conceited-looking chap he is,” returned Sir Ignatius, looking after him. “Sorrow know I’d know him again; and it would be hard for me, since I never saw him before, though I lint him my shirt, to oblige the doctor—my dress shirt.”

“He is an elegant-looking creature,” said Lady Dogherty. “When he turns again, the doctor must introduce us.”

In the mean time Fegan had run after his master, and having followed him for some paces bareheaded, at last ventured to address him:—“Them’s the Irish gentry, Sir Frederick, if you plaze.”

“The who?” interrupted Sir Frederick, turning sharply round.

“Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty, Sir Frederick, and Doctor de Burgo, who—”

“Oh, so! where are they?”

“Them is they, sir, sitting on the binch forenent the tay-house, hard by convanient, Sir Frederick.”

The next moment Sir Frederick stood before the party, and drawing off his hat in a straight line with his head, addressed them in a few words of courtesy and gratitude. Sir Ignatius stood bareheaded, with a look of great deference, notwithstanding Lady Dogherty’s nudges, and the example of the doctor, whose *sang-froid* was evinced by his remaining buried in his book, and (of course) unconscious of the approach of the stranger. When forced, however, to take cognizance of the fact, the doctor’s start, look, and close of the volume were a perfect rehearsal of the scene of Joseph Surface’s surprise on the appearance of Sir Peter.

Sir Frederick Mottram’s thanks, brief and pithy, were soon made; his apologies soon offered; and he was already taking up his first

position, for escape, when a movement of Lady Dogherty's rendered it impossible. She insisted that he should take Sir Ignatius's place, between herself and Dr. de Burgo: "It is some time, Sir Frederick," she said, "since I had the honour of meeting you."

Sir Frederick, not aware of the circumstance, made a slight inclination of the head to this unexpected recognition.

"Oh then, no wonder if you should not remember it," continued her ladyship with a deep sigh; "you must think me greatly changed since then. It was at the Castle, Sir Frederick, on Patrick's night. It was my first saison in Dublin. I was then Miss Kearney, of Fort Kearney, county Kerry. The poor Duke always called me Kate Kearney. You knew the Duke of Richmond, Sir Frederick: one of the best lord-lieutenants, and a talented creature."

"I had that honour; but I was then quite a boy, and went to Ireland merely for a holiday recreation, with my tutor."

"There niver was such a viceroy, nor niver will, past, present, or to come!" said Sir Ignatius. "He was at our house during the whole of his visit to Killarney, with his shute, and the young A. B. C.'s. as they signed themselves in the book in our bar."

"Hem! an album!" said Lady Dogherty, nudging Sir Ignatius; "an album, in which we enter the names of all illustrious travellers who visit us."

"Call it what you plaze, Lady D." said Sir Ignatius, with a wry face, and withdrawing his foot from the pressure of hers.

"Well, Sir Frederick, as I am after telling you, the divel of such rollicking times ever we seen in Kerry since:—and it wasn't ould Sneyd the wine-merchant that was the worse of it, any how! Would you believe it, Sir Frederick, I paid Sneyd, that year, fifteen hundred pounds for port and claret; to say nothing of the whiskey (parliament and poteen)! Well, God be with the times, when a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was not ashamed to prefer a sup of hot, the true native mountain-dew, 'bove all the wishwash that ever came across says!"

"Do you know the Duncannons, or the Dorsets, or the Devonshires, Sir Frederick?" interrupted Lady Dogherty in great confusion, and with much abruptness. "I hope they are all well? I had the honour of dancing with the Duke at a ball at Lismore; and he did me the honour of calling on me the day after."

“ Tell Sir Frederick, Kitty dear, ” said Sir Ignatius, chuckling, “ about your mother’s tumbling down stairs to receive his Grace ; and her broken nose ! and the brown paper steeped in spurrits, and she smelling of whiskey like blazes ! She’ll make you die laughing, Sir Frederick ; ’pon my daffy she will ! ”

Fegan thrust his handkerchief into his mouth. Lady Dogherty was ready to sink.

“ Sir Ignatius, how can you suppose that Sir Frederick would be amused with such nonsense ! ”

“ Nonsense, woman ! why it was the fun of the world, and was fit to put in a book ! ” replied Sir Ignatius : “ and I ’m sure ! ”

“ I hope you are fond of reading, ” interrupted the Lady Dogherty, endeavouring to draw off Sir Frederick’s attention from her husband. “ If we can be of any use to you in that way, pray command us. Sir Ignatius has bought a very pretty ambulating *bibliothèque de voyage*. It was selected by our friend the Doctor here, who, as you see, Sir Frederick, is a very book-worm. ”

The Doctor rose, closed his book, and replied laughingly—“ Not a worm, Lady Dogherty ; anything but that. The fact is, I read running. ”

“ And galloping too, ” said Sir Ignatius. “ I’ll ride and read the Doctor gainst any man in England, be he who he may. ”

“ Life is short, and art long, ” said Doctor de Burgo, shrugging.

“ And time, ” said Sir Frederick dryly, “ is the capital of talent, and should not be suffered to lie idle a moment. ”

The Doctor bowed ; Lady Dogherty flirted her large green fan, and smiled ; and Sir Ignatius yawned with all the sonorous vociferation of ‘ a voice from St. Helena ; ’ while Fegan, touching his hat, made the sign of the cross over Sir Ignatius’s ‘ capacious mouth ’—a manœuvre of devotion against the entrance of the unclean spirit, usual on such occasions among the lower Irish.

At that moment a lady, accompanied by a female attendant, and followed by a foreign chasseur, passed before the party, and attracted their attention : they too caught her’s ; for she held her glass to her eye with a pertinacity of notice more marked than well-bred ; which drew from Lady Dogherty the observation that “ it was certainly some one who knew them. ”

The lady was simply and gravely dressed in a black pelisse and

bonnet; yet her air was distinguished, and her walk perfection.

“ Devilish nice foot and ankle ! ” said the Doctor, looking after her ; “ steps out like a race-horse ! She certainly does know us, Lady D. ”

“ Can it be our friend of Brighton, the Ambassadors ? ” asked Lady Dogherty ; or dear Lady Anastasia’s cousin, the Duchess ? ”

“ Why, thin, don’t you know who it is ? ” asked Sir Ignatius. “ Don’t you remember the Don Whiskerandos there, that follies her ? Sure, isn’t it the Princess, — the German Princess we met at the Opera, who sat in one of her own carriages all night, on board the packet ? What’s this they call her ? ”

“ The Princess of Schaffhausen ! to be sure, so it is ! ” said the Doctor ; “ the least dumpy German woman, by the bye, I ever saw. That’s a capital idea of Byron’s ; I hate a dumpy woman ! Do you know the Princess, Sir Frederick ? If so, may I beg an introduction ? ”

Sir Frederick replied in the negative, and then abruptly bowed and took his leave ; while Fegan, touching his hat to his new protectors and compatriots as he passed them, followed his master.

The party looked surprised at the suddenness of Sir Frederick’s adieu ; and Sir Ignatius exclaimed —

“ I say, Doctor, did ever you see such a Don as that, with his snuff-the-moon look ? Would any one think, now, that it was my shirt he’s gallivanting away in — my fine new, baby-linen-warehouse best shirt, never worn since washed ; or that it’s your new black silk stiffener he’s philandering off with, and my lady’s white French tamboored cambric pocket-handkerchief peeping out of his pocket ? — and not as much as ‘ Thank ye,’ or ‘ I’ll see you by and by,’ or ‘ Will you take a glass of anything ? ’ nor even an illusion to it ! Well, ’pon my daisy ! that’s a cool chap ; like the rest of them English quality, who’ll take all from we Irish, and divel a word of thanks after ! What did I ever get for the shell-work grotto, framed and glazed, and made by the Ladies of the Ascension, that I gave the Marchioness when she put up at my house ? or for the picture of ‘ Maria and her goat,’ worked on white satin by the Ladies of Mercy at Cork convent, that I won at a raffle, and gave to Lady Mary, in regard of the place I expected ? — or what will ever ye get, Kitty Dogherty, by your great friend, Lady Anny Statius Mac Queery, that wore the wheels off our bran new carriage at Brighton, and

stifled the life out of me by stuffing herself into our little fly every night; who made you ask all her fine friends to your party; who laughed at Lady Dixon, and then refused to present you at Coorte! or get you invited, like the Connors and Smiths, to the Queen's balls?"

"She did the next thing to it," said Lady Dogherty; "she got us her cousin's the Duchess's box at the Opera, on that famous Saturday night."

"And if she did, devil thank her! didn't you pay six guineas to What-d'ye-call-'um the bookseller for it? and wouldn't wonder if she went snacking."

"There were those, Sir Ignatius, who would have paid fifty guineas for such a distinction!"

"Why, then, greater omadams they; and I appale to the Doctor here. Why, then, blood alive! what's gone with the Doctor?"

Sir Ignatius, during this dialogue, had been watching a lugger through his telescope, as it entered the harbour; and he had not noticed the Doctor's departure, nor the significant whisper of the lady which had instigated it.

Passing her arm through her husband's, Lady Dogherty now led the way towards their hotel; giving him, on the road, one of those lectures on vulgarity, foolish allusions to past times, and similar offences against her notions of propriety, to which the Baronet was more accustomed than submissive.

Sir Ignatius was a gentleman 'upon compulsion,' though a baronet by descent; and while his 'new honours' had not yet clung to him 'by the aid of use,' the habits of his past life and the exigencies of the present frequently placed him in what, in modern political parlance, is called a false position; from which the tact of Lady Dogherty, her admonitions and reprehensions, in vain endeavoured to extricate him. Lady Dogherty was 'a real gentlewoman bred and born.' As Miss Kearney, she had flirted through the garrisons of Cork and Kerry during the last twenty years, and having become *à charge* to her nephew Phineas Kearney, of Fort Kearney, Esq., and finding the officers less flirtable than formerly, she had submitted to sacrificing her refinement, talents, and gentility, to become Lady Dogherty of Shanballymac House (the name of a new unfinished lantern-built square edifice, which stood 'alone in its glory,' in the midst of a black bog, near the village of Shanballymac).

This mansion had been intended by Sir Ignatius as the Tusculum of his learned leisure, where he meant to pass the residue of his days in sauntering to the town of Shanballymac, drinking whisky-punch, attending the Mallow races, and occasionally, 'in the glimpses of the moon,' revisiting the Stag's Horns,—a firm in which, if he was not a sleeping partner, he was at least an interested admirer and habitual frequenter.

But if man proposes, woman disposes. The second year of their marriage had already commenced, and Sir Ignatius had not yet seated himself in his mansion. He had passed a month in Dublin during 'the Castle season,' two at Kingstown, three at Bath, four at Cheltenham, and three at Brighton, where Lady Dogherty had been sent by the physicians for her health, which, in spite of appearances, was decreed to be eminently delicate. In this last place she had become acquainted with Dr. de Burgo; and at his suggestion she was now going to try the waters of Baden: having first secured his medical services on the journey, for a remuneration, of course, utterly inadequate to the value of his immense talents, and the extensive list of patients he was kind enough to abandon for her sake!

Lady Dogherty had hoped much for Sir Ignatius's improvement, from the society, conversation, and accomplishments of their clever medical attendant. As yet, however, Dr. de Burgo had treated him with silent indifference; or only noticed his blunders to laugh, and his vulgarities to sneer at him. He had, at once, discovered that Lady Dogherty was *chef en second*; and that Sir Ignatius was accessible, if need were, through his love of a 'sup of hot,' and his fear of the cholera. These motives were sufficient levers for the Doctor to act upon; and with the power of indulgence, privation, and terror which they gave him over his patient, they enabled him to see his way, without giving himself any farther trouble in managing, for his own purposes, his employer—so long as it might be necessary to take the trouble of managing him at all.

To abbreviate this interval and hasten his future rise in professional life, he had now left his party, and followed and sought Sir F. Mottram with the design of doing away, as he best might, the impressions which he felt the low breeding and coarse vulgarity of his Irish patient must have produced on the English gentleman.

Doctor de Burgo was a specimen of a peculiar genus not rare

among the medical tribe. His *savoir faire* far exceeded his *savoir*. He was, in fact, a mere impersonation of charlatanism in its most striking, though not in its coarsest, characteristics. Rapid in perception, quick in adaptation; seeing at a glance the weaknesses of others, skilful in concealing his own; gifted to amuse, but prompt to injure; he was morally, as professionally, more bent upon watching the effect he was producing, than delicate as to the means by which it was produced. Urged by the restless energies of an implacable vanity to seek, and even to 'command success,' his vengeance against all that crossed him, even accidentally, in his path, was enduring and implacable. Without any of those sterner principles which might have impeded the march of one of more elevated sentiments, he found no difficulty in mastering the feeblenesses of all classes: but while, with seeming frankness, he blinded his dupes, he employed them perseveringly to serve himself and to crush his rivals. In the pursuit of eminence, he counted more upon mental than bodily infirmities; and taking in turn the colour of every prejudice, he was amusing with the idle, canting with the pious, politic with the factious, and sentimental with the imaginative. By an adroit display, also, of professional technicalities, that rarely committed itself to a fact or an opinion, and by a ready complaisance to wishes intuitively divined, he passed on the superficial for superskilful, and on the feeble for more than kind.

Thus gifted, had his lot been cast in a great metropolis, he might have early become the oracle of a court, the dispenser of ether and opium, gossip and scandal, to dowager royalties and gentlewomen in waiting; and would have reached that envied round in the professional ladder, which gives in substantial profit all that it refuses in personal respectability and professional esteem. As yet, however, fortune had not been favourable to the exploitation of these qualities; and wanting the opportunity for introduction into the higher walks of society, he considered himself fortunate in having captivated the attention and confidence of Lady Dogherty, whose landau and livery-servants had established to his perfect satisfaction the fact of her command of wealth.

Sir Frederick Mottram had gained the strand beneath the ramparts, and was pursuing his way with a slow, measured pace, so absorbed as to be almost unconscious that the evening tide was

advancing on his path and breaking at his feet, when Dr. de Burgo overtook him (it might have been thought) more by chance than by predetermination. He touched his hat to one whose reception was anything but encouraging, and addressed him with a careless familiarity, founded possibly on a previous resolve not to be rebutted.

“ A charming retreat this, Sir Frederick, from the ramparts; that type of Margate, and all such horrors, with its tea-and-muffin-shop. Good fun though, sometimes, with its snobs and originals; but there is no escaping the felicity-hunting and most obtrusive subjects of his Britannic Majesty, anywhere, ‘ from Indus to the Pole, ’ as the poet says. ”

“ It is difficult, ” said Sir Frederick coldly, and looking on his watch.

“ Oh, impossible ! ” said the Doctor, either not feeling or not noticing the retort. “ But I am glad to see you, sir, consulting the oracle, keeping your eye on the enemy. To a constitution like yours, Sir Frederick, time is everything. Had I the honour of prescribing for you, I should be more anxious to regulate your hours than your diet; and to prescribe regular periods for air and exercise, rather than drugs. ”

Sir Frederick smiled, and threw his eyes upon the speaker, whose countenance had the sharpness, the quickness, and the malice of a monkey's. The Doctor was, as usual, looking for a weakness, an absurdity, an opening, in short, through which to attack the great man with whom he had become accidentally acquainted, and whom he had already foredoomed to be a stepping-stone on which he should mount to professional, social, or any other supremacy; for his vanity had no predilections, and his ductility was applicable to everything.

“ You think I am an invalid ? ” said Sir Frederick, almost diverted from the disagreeable thoughts of the last ten minutes, conjured up through the irritating associations connected with the appearance of the travelling Princess.

“ No, ” said the Doctor, “ not that; not a valetudinarian; but you have the true intellectual temperament. You pay the penalty of a superior organization, in common with the Romillies, the Byrons, and all that are wisest, wittiest, and best. ”

Sir Frederick stifled a sigh, and slightly bowed.

“ It is curious enough to consider the human reptile—or god—in all its varieties, from its earliest organization to its most perfect development! You are aware, I suppose, that man is originally a tadpole? ”

“ No, indeed! ” said Sir Frederick, smiling: “ I was not aware of that humiliating fact. ”

“ ’Tis all true, though. We are all reptiles at our origin. ”

“ And some continue so to the end,” said Sir Frederick, laughingly.

“ Just that, by Jove! The whole is a pretty humbug; and yet—ahem!”

He turned his sharp eyes to search for an expression in his companion’s face, by which he might discover whether his cue was to be the dogged orthodoxy of the church-and-state tory, the philosophy of the materialist, or the scepticism of the man of the world. Sir Frederick looked grave, as one of the Oxford school, and moreover a considerable lay-impropriator, should do.

“ And yet,” continued the Doctor, “ ‘ a mighty maze, but not without a plan,’ as Pope says: while it bewilders the philosopher, it teaches the Christian a mistrust of his own blindness. In short, as the infidel Voltaire observes, this best of all possible worlds is—— However, one cannot doubt, that ‘ whatever is, is right;’ call it fate, necessity, or Providence. Your opinion, I dare say, Sir Frederick?”

“ Not exactly,” said Sir Frederick, with whom, at that moment, all that *was*, was wrong.

“ At all events, it is unavailing, and sometimes perilous, to drop the lead too deeply. The fools will always have the best of it.”

“ Not always,” replied Sir Frederick; “ the rogues come in for their share.”

“ Humph! Why, yes!—Oh! by the bye, Sir Frederick, you must have been amused by that specimen of a wild Irishman, my very new friend (for I only saw him for the first time a day or two back), Sir Ignatius Dorty, or Dogherty, or Dogberry. Circumstances of a very delicate nature, *entre nous*—in short, a foolish, but devilish pretty girl, mistook my professional interest for—you may conceive: but let that pass, as Scott has it. The girl must die all the same; but,

in the mean time, you know, I thought it a good plan to travel, that is, till my friends the Tories come in : for I have the solemn promise of a friend to do something for me in the King's medical household, as soon as the blow-up comes ; and things cannot go on much longer on the present Whig tack. So I accepted Lady Dogherty's proposal to accompany her abroad ; not, indeed, so much in consideration of the very liberal sum I am to receive, as because her case is singular and important. I am writing on the subject. She is really an interesting person, and as celebrated as the *Biondina in gondole* of Venice ; for she is the *Biondina* of the lakes of Killarney, the original of the Kate Kearney, sung by Mrs. Waylett—charming little creature, Mrs. Waylett ! But, with a thousand good and amiable qualities, poor Lady Dogherty is a *little* quizzical, a little *too* blue."

"A little too *red*, I should say," observed Sir Frederick. "She looks like a moving plethora."

"She is dying," said the Doctor, gravely ; "but not of that."

"Dying !" said Sir Frederick, smiling like Cassius, as one who 'mocked himself, and scorned his spirit, that could be moved to smile at anything.' "

"Yes, actually dying—though slowly. She has lost a lung."

"A what !" asked Sir Frederick.

"A lung," replied the Doctor. "She was *poitrinaire* from her cradle ; neglected, or improperly treated ; fell into the hands of a Dublin doctor, or rather surgeon, of the old school ; a dogged operator, a fellow with the physiology of a butcher. The truth stared me in the face. I saw it, as if she lay before me on a dissecting table. Well, she was given over ; sent to Cheltenham, to die out of the way ; came to Brighton ; fell into my hands ; and here she is. I can't give her a lung ; but if I can get her to live on and enjoy life without one"

"It will be a miracle ; though, really she seems, as it is, to enjoy life and its good things to admiration."

"Yes, yes ; I see ; the redness in her face. It brightens her eyes, and whitens her teeth : all disease, all symptomatic. You are going to drink the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle, I presume, Sir Frederick ? But, if I might obtrude a travelling opinion, I should say, 'Try Baden.' Allow me : just turn your eyes to the light.

Ay, I see; overworked,—that malady of minds, that ‘o’erinform their tenement of clay.’ So try Baden; but don’t try the German physicians: German metaphysics, as much as you will. You have read Kant, of course—a floorer to the materialists. I admire Kant, as much as that divine woman, Madame de Stael. I am for the spiritual, to the very verge of illusion.”

Sir Frederick stifled a sigh.

“If you will allow me, I’ll send you a little analysis of Kant’s system, when we get to Brussels. You stop at Brussels?”

“Yes, merely to await my carriage.”

“The only thing you will now find worth staying for there. The revolution is a regular humbug; but what can you expect from the ‘*canaux, canards, canailles*,’ as Rousseau calls the *braves Belges*.”

“I thought it had been Voltaire, who said it of the Dutch?”

“Oh, ay!—all the same, you know; the same population, all Dutch-land. I go by physiology. There is a link between man and the monkey; that is too curious! I speak as an anatomist! I don’t mean as to the soul!

‘The vital spark of heavenly flame!’

A noble line that, worthy of a Christian writer! But Adrian, like Seneca, almost anticipated the moral of Revelation.”

By this time the interlocutors had arrived in the town, and were traversing the *Place d’Armes*, when the *chasseur* of the Princess of Schaffenhauseu came forth from a little book-shop. Doctor de Burgo looked earnestly after the man; and Sir Frederick, whether he was desirous of getting rid of his intrusive companion, or really wanted to make some purchase, touched his hat, and entered the library.

After turning over several of the provoking but pleasant *contractions* of the Meline press, he asked for a Guide-book—“something—anything—he didn’t care what—about the country.” The man of the shop had nothing of the kind left. The immense flocks of English that had arrived by the last few packets had carried off all the Guides. He had sold the last of them to that English gentleman who was walking there with the *chasseur* of the Princess of

Schaffhausen. She had just sent her *chasseur* to procure one; but he had it not to give him. It was unlucky, for the Princess started early the next morning: at least, so the *chasseur* thought.

Sir Frederick gave out that full and deep respiration which proceeds from the bosom which is suddenly relieved from some heavy weight. Still he continued to pore over the books on the counter, till he lighted on a 'History of the Low Countries' by Mr. Grattan, and some other local works, which he bought and ordered to his hotel.

This he thought would be *pâturage* for the time which he should have to remain at Ostend; and after spending some additional time in wandering about the silent and empty streets of this once stirring and populous town, he returned, not to take 'his ease at his inn,' but to indulge in the solitude of its dreary and old-fashioned apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLESSÉ.

AMONG the many metaphysical refinements for which philosophy stands indebted to the Germans, there is none more luminous, and at the same time more sound, than their distinction between subjective and objective reality. The aspect of external nature borrows so much of its character, not only from the temperament and disposition, but from the caprices of feeling and passion, of the beholder, that the evidence of the senses scarcely suffices to convince us of the identity of certain objects, when revisited under a change of fortunes or of moods. It is thus that Paris may be rendered joyless and melancholy as its own Place de Grève; and that Ostend, of ill-omened notoriety for its monotony and dullness, may become enjoyable to those to whom it proves an abrupt and refreshing transition.

In all the changes and chances of human life, there were few more striking and sudden than that which Sir Frederick Mottram had

passed in arriving at the Belgian shores. The spoiled child of fortune, the 'English epicure,' the man made up of party views, local habits, and conventional principles, was now paying the penalty of his ignorance of all that constitutes the sad reality of a 'work-a-day world;' and was suffering some of the more painful consequences to which vice, folly, misfortune, or poverty, habitually expose the great mass of society's less-favoured children. Flying from evils which had worn out his patience, he had fallen upon others which hitherto 'he knew not of;' and in escaping from the vexations and annoyances incidental to the highest positions in the social sphere, he tasted, though but for the moment, of those incidental almost to the lowest.

Deprived of conveniences which were to him a second nature, of luxuries which he deemed necessities; without money or credit; unknown, suspected, distrusted, he had escaped by a mere accident from the ridicule of being sent back to England as a branded runaway, the victim of illiberal international laws which he had himself contributed to perpetuate: and for this escape he was indebted, in unredeemable obligation, to persons whose vulgarity shocked him, and whose probable future acquaintance might be troublesome, obtrusive, and ridiculous.

Still, (the greater embarrassments of his new position having been overcome,) it was not without its charm. To have merely escaped from the scenes of disquietude which he had fled,—to have exchanged the turmoil of political dissension and domestic jars for the solitude and tranquillity of Ostend,—would have done less to tranquillize his irritability, and restore the tone of his distempered mind, than this sudden plunge into pecuniary and personal difficulties, so new and so whimsical. His attention had been distracted: a new train of ideas had been forced upon him; he had been occupied, thrown upon the ways and means of chance; the past had been violently and abruptly dissociated from the present; and under this revulsion of ideas and habits, the old Flemish and once prosperous sea-port afforded objects of curiosity and interest, that gradually seized upon his imagination, and rendered him even cheerfully submissive to a species of exile and detention, to which so many English voluptuaries are condemned, in the small retired towns of the French and Flemish coasts,

The ascertainment of his rank and fortune, in procuring him that attention and credit which are never refused to the possessors of such distinctions, left few recollections of the recent misadventure beyond those which belonged to its whimsicality and exciting novelty. The energy of his intellect, too, was something restored by the rallying of his bodily health ; and in giving himself up to his new situation, and exploring the resources of the place, he had stumbled upon one of those obscure, neglected curiosity shops, so frequent in the Flemish towns, where he purchased some old chronicles relating to the early history of the Low Countries, which, smelling of the *terrain*, awakened a new and deep interest for its stormy story.

While waiting for letters from England, he had nothing to do but to read and write ; and he did both on the sea-shore, enjoying the breath and beams of heaven to a luxurious excess. He almost constantly occupied the *Pavillon des Bains*, and was occasionally amused at the novel combinations that *local* afforded.

It was under feelings so new (though not unconnected with the earliest associations of his life), that he resumed his correspondence with Horace Harvey, between whom and himself, though the world had rushed, nature had woven links never to be wholly severed. The same intellectual temperaments, differently directed ; the same sensibility to all that is beautiful in nature and in art, prevailing in both, had produced, between the moderate tory and the epicurean liberal, a sympathy in sentiment and taste, which no divergence of political or abstract opinions could diminish, or wholly interrupt. In the existing isolation of his heart and circumstances, the desire to communicate the impressions he was receiving, and to seek for sympathy in his new views, was becoming almost a physical want ; and the necessity of disposing of a certain quantity of surplus leisure, not improbably improved this feeling into an impulse to again address his friend, after the lapse of four days from his previous letter.

“TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.

“Pavillon des Bains, Ostend.

“DEAR HORACE,—I write principally to relieve you from the apprehension of my being taken up for a vagabond, and sent back to

England. Well! I am restored to the ranks of the honest and the trust-worthy, owing to the interference of the Irish family I mentioned in my last. Such originals! and yet persons of rank, wealth, and boundless hospitality. From their own showing, at least, they have received half the aristocracy of England at their old castle, somewhere on the road to Killarney. Imagine their having expended fifteen hundred pounds on wine in one year, when they entertained the Lord Lieutenant of the time being! The old Milesian is vulgar to the extremest verge of Irish vulgarity. His lady, all pretension and *bleu*; and then the travelling physician, who is Irish too! He, however, puzzles me. He is obtrusive, familiar, and of true Irish assurance; but he is a devilish clever fellow, very amusing, and extremely quick in his professional views. In a short walk, he threw out some very odd observations; and made a better guess at my disease, than any of the big-wigs I consulted in London.

“I was very near having the honour of the whole party’s society; but that they have joined the travelling suite, of—who, for a ducat? Why, my *bête noire*, the Princess of Schaffenhausen.

“On the evening of my arrival here, as I sat on the ramparts, *enclavé* between Sir Ignatius and my lady, the identical Princess passed us, veiled and muffled as usual, and pointing her impertinent glass full upon us.

“Can you imagine the absurd coincidence of our sailing in the same packet! Her apparition at my house in London had been among the causes of drawing me from it; and here she is, or rather was; since she left Ostend the next morning, with the Dogherties in her train. What an inexplicable creature! what energies! what physical as well as moral force! There are traits in her character, or rather her conduct, which sometimes remind me of Christine of Sweden—a great creature, though a perverted one! But what is her object—what her pursuit! Yet, of what consequence is this to me? Her association with such creatures as the Dogherties, however, is very amusing.

“I have had a note from the Doctor, by the bye, to apologize for not offering me a seat in their carriage to Brussels. ‘We have been suddenly induced to join the party of her Highness the Princess of Schaffenhausen, and start early to-morrow,’ he says; ‘but we shall

be happy to renew our acquaintance, and receive the honour of your commands at the 'Hôtel de Bellevue; etc. etc.'

"So I am *quitte pour la peur*. What a people these Irish are! While I was writing the last line, I overheard a fine-looking fellow, standing at the door of the Pavillon, say to a pretty Flemish fruit-girl, '*Vous êtes belle, Ma'm'selle!*'—'*Non Monsieur, je ne suis que jolie!*' was the reply. But the compliment was so often repeated, that I rose to see who was the pertinacious cavalier. To my infinite surprise, I discovered it to be Lawrence Fegan, my Irish *Jocrisse*, whose blunders have plunged me into so many difficulties, from which I am not yet quite extricated.

"His actual appearance, compared with the impression he had made upon me at Carlton-terrace, set identity at defiance. He had availed himself of the order I had given for a suit of livery, to banish all that was tigrish in his groom's frock; and the first French tailor of Ostend has produced a dress on the dandy model of the Doctor's *défroque*, so that little more than the colour of my livery remained.

"To my exclamation of 'Fegan, is that you?' he answered, with a flourishing Flemish bow, 'It is, of coorse, Sir Frederick.' He coloured deeply as I threw my eye over his clothes, and added, 'I ax your pardon, sir; if my new coat isn't intirely of the livery cut, it is the fault of Mounseer the *tailleur*. And in regard of being your honor's own groom and vally, I have sworn upon the holy and blessed altar of the *église* of Nother Dame, not to let a drop of naked spirits pass my lips till I get back to Ireland, be that same short or long: and am after endeavouring to pick up a word of Frinch, to make myself useful, by buying strawberries from the young Ma'm'selles of the pleece, and reading the signs over the shop-doors, sir.' I give you this speech verbatim; but his look and accent are beyond the reach of art.

"All this time the fair *vrouw* stood smiling and curtseying; while Fegan, with the strawberries in one hand and his hat in the other, was really not at all unlike his patron the Doctor. His quickness, improvability, and humour, have vanquished me! I ordered him to pay the young woman for her fruit; and left him counting out the change for a franc, and murmuring his '*Vous êtes belle;*' which, I suspect, constitutes the whole of his present vocabulary. He appears to be honest, willing, alert, and an excellent groom; and though I

shall probably want but little of his services in that capacity, I shall bear with him, and pick up at Brussels something between a courier and a valet, to complete my travelling suite.

“ But whither am I to travel? I dare not yet turn my thoughts towards Carlton-terrace; and ‘*de die in diem*’ must be my motto until some motive starts up to steer or fix me. Meantime, I read and saunter away my time, in your own *poco-curante* way; and have already made an acquaintance with some of the natives that rather interests me in the Belgian Revolution: hitherto, I confess, the object of my indifference, at the least. I had been more than disgusted by its drawling and unsatisfactory details of inconclusive negotiations; having watched its progress and protocols, through the spectacles of the Holy Alliance, and under some certain social prejudices, for which, perhaps, our London coteries are answerable.

“ One of my approaches to the ramparts (where I actually live) is by a rope-walk, where an old *maître fabriquant de cordage* presents such a perfect figure of one of Tenier’s *drôles*, that I bought some pencils and drawing-card for the purpose of sketching him, (the first time I have taken up a pencil, by the bye, for eight years.) He saw what I was about, and lest he should be offended, I scratched in a bit of a ruined building, and asked him the name of the place. He looked at it, and sighed. ‘Ah, Seigneur Dieu!’ he observed in excellent French, ‘there is nothing now in this town worth making a picture of—it is a ruin. Some thirty years ago, there were still some fine things to be seen in it; but the *blocus continental* of the Emperor Napoleon gave the *coup de grâce* to the prosperity of Ostend; and then, to make bad worse, we were given over to the king of the Dutch; and it was his cursed Dutch gunpowder that exploded in 1826, and completed our misfortunes. The government magazine, to be sure, went up along with it; that was some comfort; but the town was nearly reduced to ruins. The earthquake was felt at Brussels. The explosion took its course along the shore. The *Haze-gras*, the finest *place* in Flanders, became a heap of rubbish; and had not Notre Dame d’Ostende watched over us, our ancient city would have been the tomb of its inhabitants.’

“ ‘*Apparemment*,’ I said, as we walked on together towards the ramparts, ‘*monsieur n’est pas Orangiste?*’

“ ‘ *Comment, monsieur !* ’ he replied, ‘ *je suis Belge, moi,—Saquer !* ’ * ”

“ At that moment we overtook a young man, with death stamped on his pale but handsome face. He was leaning on the arm of a young girl dressed in the Flemish costume, and was supported by a crutch. He wore a blue linen blouse, with red worsted epaulettes; and his little casquet was ornamented with the Belgian tri-coloured cockade (red, yellow, and black), worn with something of a military smartness.

“ ‘ It is one of our *Blessés*, ’ said the old man, taking off his cap, and saluting him respectfully. ‘ *Bonjour, mon brave ! comment va la santé ?* ’ ”

“ ‘ *Pas mal*, ’ said the young man, with a faint smile, as he seated himself on a stone bench.

“ The girl opened a little basket, presented him some biscuits and fruit, and laid a flask of wine and a horn cup beside him. After a short dialogue in Flemish, animated by a smile which could not be mistaken, she kissed her hand and turned away. I took my place beside the poor invalid, whose appearance affected me. I made some idle remarks on the sea air, and its salubrity to an invalid.

“ ‘ *C’est un de nos Blessés*, ’ repeated the old man, folding his arms upon his breast, and looking with pride on the young sufferer. ‘ He is a hero of the 26th of September, our great and glorious revolution. ’ ”

“ ‘ Did the revolution of Brussels reach to Ostend ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Reach it ! ’ repeated the old man indignantly : ‘ *par exemple !* we did not wait for that ; we met it more than half-way—*n’est-ce pas, mon brave ?* ’ ”

“ ‘ *Je crois bien !* ’ said the *Blessé*, either restored by the wine he had supped, or kindling at recollections which had their influence over his life—nay, his death ! for his hectic cheek and flashing eye spoke of rapid dissolution.

“ ‘ He can tell you something of our revolution, sir, ’ said the old man. ‘ You English gentlemen believe nothing, know nothing about us. I have talked to many of them on the ramparts, and they were all alike ignorant on the subject. *Eh, mon Dieu !* that poor lad there, who was *mitraillé* by the Dutch, was the first to

* The Flemish pronunciation of *sacre*.

plant the Belgian flag on our town. He can tell you better than I, whether we had a taste of the revolution of Brussels, or no. ’

“ I felt that I had shocked the self-love of the patriotism of Ostend, and hastened to acknowledge my ignorance and to desire information. The young patriot seemed flattered, and proud of the reference. After a little hesitation, a clearing of the voice, and a summing up of spirits, he almost burst forth,

“ ‘ The cry of liberty, monsieur, had resounded through Belgium. It found no tardy echo in Flanders ; for if *nous autres Flamands* are less explosive than the brave *Liégeois*, we were not less sensible of our grievances. Our hatred of the Dutch was of long date. We had already had our political revolts, and blood had been spilt ; the people of Ostend and its arrondissements having been irritated by the conduct of the Dutch *commandant de place*.

“ ‘ *Bien, monsieur* ; it was on the evening of the 26th of September, about six o’clock, (*I ought to remember it, Monsieur Ernest, for I had come to make preparations for my marriage,*) that the firing from Bruges was heard at Ostend. The people rose instantly ; ill-armed indeed, but with the Belgian colours at their head, and with the brave *Jean de Bataille*, an ex-officer of marine, to lead them. We directed our steps to the *Grande Place*, and the guard was disarmed in a moment. The troops flew to retake the post ; a *feu de peloton* killed nine of our bourgeois ; and I had the honour to receive wounds, of which I am yet not quite cured !

“ ‘ On the 27th, the troops of Bruges retreated on Ostend ; and on the 28th, the popular movement recommenced, with more violence than ever. It was then that the Belgian soldiers separated from the Dutch, and joined the bourgeois. On the 30th, the troops capitulated ; and surrendering the town to the Belgian military and the town-folk, sailed on the same day for Flushing.

“ ‘ Our example,’ continued the young *Blessé*, ‘ was not followed, but met by the towns of the neighbourhood. Each made its own little revolution. Furnes, Nieuport, Ypres, Dixmude, Courtray, and the major part of the communes of the *plat pays*, had scarcely more than to disarm the *maréchaussée* ; and by the 3rd of October, in the space of eight days, the Belgian flag floated on the belfries of all our villages, to the very verge of Flanders. ‘ *C’était une belle révolution que la nôtre !* ’

“ Nothing could be more animating than the countenance of the old man during this detail; and his ‘*Voilà!*’ ‘*Pardie!*’ ‘*Je le crois bien!*’ ‘*Voyez donc, monsieur!*’ formed an amusing running commentary upon the text. We were still at our ‘*belle révolution*’ when the pretty *fiancée* returned, for she was evidently the bride of the interrupted espousals. She reproved the *Blessé* for having talked too much, and drew him away; but not before I had apologized for a curiosity which might prove injurious to him, and obtained and taken down his address.—The young man slowly crawled away, supported by his mistress.

“ The old rope-maker sighed, as he followed them, with eyes full of compassion.

“ ‘ She will soon be spared this trouble, *pauvre petite!*’ he said. ‘ Every time I see him, *Jean* is a step nearer to his grave!’

“ ‘ She is of course his mistress?’ I said.

“ ‘ She was his *fiancée*, monsieur; and was to have been married, when the revolution broke out. *Jean* was a poor lad, but of respectable parentage, and one of the best workmen in the hat-manufactory at Thourout. *Marie* is the daughter of a *garde-champêtre*. His cottage stands in the forest of Wynendale. She was sent here to learn to make lace; and everything was settled for the nuptials, when the 26th of September arrived. He has told you the rest, except that her father is an Orangist, and will not now hear of their union.’

“ It is astonishing how much this little romance has interested me. I intend to look to these poor people, and try whether better medical advice cannot be procured to save the young patriot from his impending fate.

“ That *I* should become interested in the Belgian revolution, and at Ostend!—a partisan, too, on the wrong side! But the animated narrative of the unfortunate *Jean*, his youthful mistress, and her Orange father, have worked on my imagination; and this domestic episode has really excited a feeling concerning the political drama itself, not quite consonant with my habitual views of the subject. It is strange how a phrase—a word giving a tint, a colour, to events—operates this species of enchantment on the coolest auditors. The forest of Wynendale! Ypres, Courtray, names associated with the glorious wars of our own revolution. Even the ‘*nous autres Flamands*’ of honest *Jean*, identifying the speaker with a national

sentiment, wins one for a moment to an affection for his cause, and a belief in the possible permanency of its success, at variance with all preconceived opinion.

“ Modern story makes but little part of our school and university education ; and though one reads afterwards to a particular point, still there are few Englishmen sufficiently acquainted with the history of these countries, to feel their enthusiasm kindle at aught that concerns the present destinies of its people. Sometimes indeed, when one has ‘ to rise ’ upon a question of Lord Palmerston’s protocols, or the treaty of 1815, and has to get up a hit for the debate, one sends to Murray for the newest and shortest book on the matter ; but, the purpose served, the facts are forgotten.

“ Since my arrival here I have been reading an old black-letter chronicle of the Low Countries, called *La Chronique de Nangis*, which I picked up here, and which, as well as Meyer’s history of Flanders, has all the interest of a romance. To that circumstance, probably, the story of the young *Blessé* is indebted for a portion of the seduction it has exercised on me. You must first warm to a people by their antecedents, before you can interest yourself for their actual position. ”

“ P.-S.—The packet is in. A letter from Harris’s head clerk incloses me the sum I wrote for ; but he waits the return of his *chef* from Mottram Hall, to proceed with the rest of my commission, instead of sending me my letter of credit at once. This is pleasant ; for I have already expended a good part of the money he has sent me. Was there ever such an accumulation of bores ! The *exigeante* Princess, moreover, has carried off all the post-horses left by the travelling hordes of English ; so I start by the *treckschuyt* at two o’clock, where I shall be huddled in with other specimens of the animal creation, male and female, as in Noah’s ark. But, at this moment, I really am so steeped in ‘ tender sympathies ’ for others, that my own annoyances sit lightly on me.

“ I went an hour ago to see my poor *Blessé*. I found his humble dwelling in the upper story of an old edifice which probably escaped the siege by Spinola ; for nothing was ever so antique or dilapidated.

“ The chamber, No. 3, *au second*, was easily found : no door was closed against the intruder. As I approached, a figure in black,

who appeared just to have left the apartment, drew up in the narrow passage to let me pass. I think it was a female; but the picture within occupied all my attention. On a sort of truckle bed lay the extenuated form of poor Jean. The few hours which had elapsed since we parted had made great ravages, and he was in the very agony of death, though scarcely paler than I had seen him the day before. His little cap with its tri-coloured cockade was placed beside him; and a priest was praying before a temporary altar at the head of the bed. Poor *Marie*, half prostrate on the floor, knelt, with her face buried in the counterpane; while the bluff old rope-maker knelt too, and was in the act of prayer. He caught a glimpse, however, of my figure as I receded from the door, unwilling to disturb the solemn scene; and he followed me out. I had my purse in my hand; and, as if in reply to my presumed intention, he said,

“ ‘You are very kind, monsieur; but a good religious woman, *une bonne et charitable dévote*, has already provided for the wants of the invalid. But poor Jean has now no more wants!’ ”

“ ‘And Marie?’ I said.

“ ‘Marie has her parents and her own industry to support her; and though from a compatriot and a *bonne Belge* there is no degradation in the *Blessé’s* receiving assistance, yet from a stranger and the native of another land it is different. I thank you, however, in behalf of my countryman for your kindly intention—*vous êtes un brave monsieur!*’ —and he shook my hand rather roughly.

“ ‘Mine host of the hotel has come for my English letters, to renew his apologies for having taken me for a suspicious character, and to announce the departure of the *treckschuyt*.

“ ‘Let me hear from you at Brussels: and so farewell. “F. M.”’ ”

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRECKSCHUYT.

ON board the *treckschuyt* which pursues its daily voyage between Ostend and Bruges, was assembled one of those travelling congresses of European nations, which are to be found in every public vehicle supplied by enterprise to the itinerant wants of the most itinerant generation that the world has yet produced. Sir Frederick Mottram, accustomed to select his own hours for travelling, and to make 'panting time toil' after *him*, was now panting to overtake time, and was all but too late for the punctuality of the Flemish boat. Lawrence Fegan however had preceded his master, and was standing, Colossus-like, with 'one foot at sea and t' other on shore,' and swearing in good round Irish at the *conducteur*, for presuming to cast off 'the canal-boat,' or let the driver mount 'the garan,' before the arrival of Sir Frederick, whose rank and titles he announced with a pomposity by no means borne out by the two carpet-bags which contained their united baggage.

Every English eye was turned upon the 'Right Honourable,' as he stepped in. The fuss that was made by Fegan excited amusement in some, and curiosity in all. Shy, near-sighted, and preoccupied, Sir Frederick stumbled into a seat on the first bench that presented itself; and putting up his glass, perceived that there was on board but one English carriage, and a small, dark, foreign calash, without arms. A group of Englishmen, collected at one end of the boat, had all directed their eyes to him; and a party of genuine Flemish figures in the other were making observations in their native dialect, of which he was painfully conscious that he was the object.

Equally irritated by the obvious absurdity of Fegan's flourishing manner, and by his own impatience, in not waiting another day at Ostend, when no princely demand on its posting capabilities would

have interfered with his own wishes of travelling in the indulgence of complete privacy ; his first impulse was to take up a book which lay beside him, and, by burying himself in its pages, to escape farther observation. The seat which he occupied had been recently left by a female, wrapped in the all-involving black cloak and hood of Flemish costume, so prevalent even to the gates of Brussels. Perceiving her place and book in the possession of the embarrassed stranger, she courteously left them at his discretion ; and joining a female companion, (as muffled as herself,) at the farther end of the boat, she entered into conversation with a young Italian exile, who was on his way to that asylum of the expatriated worth of all nations, the capital of Belgium.

The book thus abandoned was the '*Prigioni*' of Silvio Pellico ; and in the fly-leaf was written, in pencil, the following apostrophe, the probable effusion of expatriated sympathy, for sufferings recounted with deeper pathos than the Lament of Tasso, if not with all the bitter spirit of the indignant Dante. It caught the eye and interested the attention of Sir Frederick :—

“Italy ! magnificent Italy ! region of splendid creations, where Nature reigns preeminent in the midst of her sublimity and her loveliness—where Art, by the supremacy of genius, moves proudly in her track, reproducing her forms, embodying her inspirations ! Italy ! with all your physical attributes, with all your historical recollections, why is it that a veil of sadness, like a film of crape, hangs for ever on your beauty ? Why does insecurity press upon the heart of the stranger who comes to worship on your shores ? Why, in referring to days passed in your elysian vales among your mighty monuments, is your name still breathed with sighs, still uttered with a tear ?

“ It is, that, buried in their living tombs, lie incarcerated the flower of your sons ; that your blue skies brighten not their dungeons ; that your balmy airs bring no health to their withered breasts ! It is, that Despotism and Bigotry stand watchful and suspicious to note the look, record the word, and denounce the spirit, that breathes of their iniquities : it is, that in Italy there is no personal security ; that images of fraud and violence multiply on every side ; that cells again open for their dupes, and scaffolds rise for their victims ! Nations of Europe, which of you have done

this?—England! free England! You, who open charitable bazaars for distressed foreigners, from which you exclude the Italian exile and the Polish refugee!—France! revolutionizing, but not yet revolutionized, France”

The fragment here broke off. Pellico, whose book now for the first time fell into the hands of Sir Frederick (for party in England reads only its own literature)—Pellico was his old acquaintance. He had known him in Milan in 1820, in the house of his illustrious friend Count Porro. Both Pellico and himself were, then, in the prime of early youth. Frederick Mottram, not yet of age, was returning by the north of Italy from his diplomatic residence in the English embassy at Vienna; and he had joined a ‘harlequin set’ of Whig and Tory exclusives, the future autocrats of Crockford’s and queens of Almack’s, who then nightly congregated in the Scala, and lounged daily on the Corso, in the splendid capital of Lombardy. Such as they were, ‘a mingled web of good and ill together,’ they had, in the previous year, received into their magic circle of London fashion, a flush of young Italian nobles, of the liberal sect, and bred in the scientific schools of the iron-crowned King of Italy, on whom they bestowed all that attention which rank and wealth never fail to obtain from English society. Never did Italy send forth more splendid specimens of her superior population, than in the persons of the young Counts Confalonieri, Capponi, Velo, and others, whose historical names recall the great days of Italian grandeur and independence. In gratitude for this reception into the ‘world of English ton,’ then all-powerful, the noblesse of Milan, the most enlightened of Italy, opened their marble palaces, their villas, their galleries, and their opera-boxes, to their English friends and quondam hosts.

Amongst those who best did the honours of Lombardy, were the Counts Confalonieri and Porro; and it was in a garden-room belonging to the classical *Casa Porro*, that Frederick Mottram, the young English Tory of London, the Italian Liberal of Milan, was wont to seek the author of ‘*Francisca da Rimini*,’ the editor of the ‘*Conciliatore*,’ the most accomplished and inspired of modern Italian poets. The two young men were united by the common sympathy of taste, passion, and gentle natures. Frederick Mottram stood indebted to Pellico for his first taste for Italian literature;

and when he was recalled by his ambitious father to represent a rotten borough, on his reaching majority, and to marry the daughter of a pauper duke, he had proposed to his Italian friend that he should accompany him to the land of freedom ; for so he called the England of the Holy Alliance.

Unfortunately, Pellico conceived that he had sacred duties to perform by his own country, which prevented his visiting other lands ; and he deferred the promised visit till—Italy should be free ! From that moment when, hand clasped in hand, they stood at the edge of the gondola on the banks of the Lake of Como, whence Sir F. Mottram had taken his departure from Italy, thirteen years had elapsed.

In the eventful interval, Pellico had, like so many other of his countrymen, passed the golden prime of his youth in an Austrian dungeon. And how had the British statesman passed that interval, so big with misery to millions ? As a private man, he had passed it in all the ‘ pomp and circumstance,’ in all the ease and luxury, of English aristocratic habits ; as a public man, in riveting the chains and deepening the dungeon of his Italian friends, by truckling to foreign despotism, and guarding the avenues of domestic abuse from the innovations of timely, temperate, inevitable reform.

It was in the *treckschuyt* of Ostend that this idea flashed on his imagination for the first time. He closed the book, and laying it down beside him, gave himself up to deep thoughts and sad recollections. He had passed his hand over his eyes, and his ears were shut to the jargon of many tongues which was uttering around him, when he was aroused from his reverie, the most profound and novel he had ever indulged in, by somebody plumping down on the seat beside him.

“ Beg pardon, sir,” said a rough cockney voice, “ but a seat is a seat here : crowded as a Margate hoy on a Saturday. Pretty flattish country this here, sir ; just like the Hesse coast. Howsomdever, anything’s better than Hostend ! I paid as much for a pint of port-wine there as you’d get a bottle of mideirer for in Lonnon. Porter, too, a shilling a bottle ! pretty himposition ! A poor place that Hostend as ever I see in my voyage through life ;—nothing to Ramsgate, though I can’t bring my youngers there to think so.”

He pointed to a flashy girl and gawky boy who were seated together on an opposite bench. The former was dressed after ‘ Acker-

mann's Fashions for May,' and sat sentimentally, with a book open in her hand; the latter was emptying a large cabbage-leaf of its load of currants, with which he had smeared his lubberly face, while a cargo of Ostend gingerbread peeped from his coat-pocket.

"La! pa, you are so prejudiced," said the young lady, her eyes fully directed to the figure of the Englishman of fashion; for such she had pronounced him to her brother, who had answered to the remark—"What's that to me?"

"Margate," she continued, "is becoming so shocking vulgar, and there is something so very foreign in Hostend! Pray, sir," addressing Sir Frederick, "how far may it be from Hostend to *Haix-la-Chapelle*?"

"As far as from the first of Haugust to the foot of Westminster-bridge," said the father. "Why, what does it signify, Susan? I tell you I von't stop at that there place, by no means. I don't mean to stop no where till I leave Bill at school at Idleburgh. Are you going as far as Idleburgh, sir?"

"No, sir," said Sir Frederick, measuring the interlocutor with the look of one unused to such coarse contact.

"Well, sir, by all accounts, you might do worser. I am a-going to put this here tall boy to school there; where he will be hedicated, fed, and clothed for two years, for less than I pay for six months at Charter-house for my son James. But James is the held-est; and his mother will have him sent to college, and made a gentleman of, and a lawyer. This here boy is a-going into a great Hinglish brewery at Lige, as is kept by a cousin of mine; and he, you see, must get a *parlez-vous* hedication and learn Jarman; and so he is going to Idleburgh."

"The young gentleman," said Sir Frederick, insensibly amused, "will, I dare say, have no objection."

"Not he, sir. All he wants is plenty to heat and drink, and time to play. My nevy, sir, Tom Tyler—my name is Tyler, sir; you may have heard of our house, the Tylers of Milk-street, well known in the city: an old house now!——"

"Very," said Sir Frederick, irresistibly smiling, "and one not unknown to history. I take it for granted you are a descendant from Wat Tyler?"

"No, sir, no! My father's name, sir, was Job; I'm not ashamed

to own it, sir : the first of our family. He began life an errand-boy to a draper in Holburn, and died head of the business. I am proud on't; though I dare say, sir, you know some would be ashamed to own their father was poor and industrious, and worked up their way in the world!"—Sir Frederick felt his blood mount to his face, and threw round a furtive glance at the English passengers.

"Well, sir, as I was saying, my nevy, who is rider to Mr. Cockrell at Lige, (I mean to stop a day at the iron-works as we comes back; but business fust, you know,)—my nevy wrote to me about a famous Spa; and it's by Tom's advice that I'm a-going to look arter an highland in the Rhine, sir, the highland of Nun's Wart, which I have some idear of purchasing."

"Nonnenswerth, pa," interrupted the young lady.

"Tom," continued Mr. Tyler, "recommends us to buy up the whole highland, and make a sort of a Beulah Spa of it;—great speculation, that. Hire a gipsy in Norwood, if there a'nt none in these here foreign parts; but them chaps are everywhere—vagrants, sir, vagrants. Still, sir, the public must be served, as my father used to say of blue printed linens, when the bird's-eye pattern came into fashion. A bad harticle, my father used to say; but the public must be served in its own way. Now, sir, gipsies are bad harticles; but as I hear 'tis the Hinglish chiefly frequents the river Rhine, set in case I likes the thing, and completes the speculation, they shall have a gipsy and asses in plenty to suit their tastes."

"And what may be the object of your speculation? you are going a great way for it," said Sir Frederick, beginning to enjoy Mr. Tyler's communicativeness.

"Why, sir, you see, money's a drug now-a-days. One can get ten thousand in the city now easier than our fathers could borrow a guinea; and seeing that all our advertising papers are full of the Rhine, and that all our folk in the city are beginning to give up Margate for the Rhine, I writes to my nevy, he being in foreign parts, to find out what might be done there; and so, sir, he recommends me to come and look arter this highland of Nunsworth, where there is a sort of a Hinglish hotel or boarding-ouse already. Besides, my nevy says, we may have a box of our hown on the highland, for half what my wife pays for a lodging for three weeks at Brighton when the royal family's there; and get from Lonnon

more cheap and in half the time we goes to Arrowgate. Well, I wish we were at—what d'ye call the highland, Susan; for I'm sick of travelling already."

"The island of Nonnenswerth, pa—a most beautiful and romantic spot," recited Miss Susan, turning to Sir Frederick. "It is the subject of a sweet poem in a forthcoming work, as the journal of Ton says."

"Sweet my eye," said Mr. Tyler, winking at Sir Frederick. "Poems! nonsense! Get a doctor to puff it for the wholesomes; and that will fill the boarding-ouse, and get you a smart husband, mayhap; and then, I suppose, I must come down 'with a slice of our own little highland.'"

"The island of Nonnenswerth," continued Miss Tyler, addressing Sir Frederick, and blushing at her father's vulgarity, "is situated in the midst of the Rhine, close to the castle of Rolandseck. It was built by Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne, to be near his beautiful mistress, who was a nun in a convent in the island which pa is about to purchase."

"Ay, ay! never mind that: we'll give'em a Roland for their Oliver, and bring over a Lonnon harchitect to build the spa-ouse after the pattern of Beulah. A Hinglish hotel is worth all the old papist nunneries in Christendom! I hate the papists, sir—that's the truth on't; would like to hexterminate them root and branch from the face of the world. See what the've been a-doing in Hireland! Why, sir, one of the reasons why I wouldn't vote for Obhouse, (though the family deals at our ouse,) is because he was a catholic hemancipator."

During this confidential dialogue, Sir Frederick's attention had turned to a little band of musicians, consisting of a harp, violin, and violoncello, which usually accompanies the boat; and Miss Susan Tyler, with more observation than her father, perceiving the circumstance, abruptly changed the conversation.

"What a charming hoperer we have had this season, sir! You admire Italian music, I perceive. Do you remember Paster and Rubini in that charming duet '*M'abbracciar Argyrior*'?"

"It's all humbug!" said the father. "Costs the nation a power, and ruins the morals of our wives and darters. Nobody in the city went to hoperers in my young days! Never was there in my life,—rather hear Hirish Johnson, or Charley Dignum, poor

fellows ! than all the Squalinis in the world. Charley always sung ‘ *Blow, blow, thou winter’s wind,* ’ when his own night was a-coming, because there was summut in it about ‘ *benefits forgot,* ’ ha ! ha ! ha ! Droll chap that ! always took tickets and a front row in the second boxes for his benefit ; always sung his best song for our Company dinners. ”

“ La ! pa, how you do talk ! There was never no English music worth earing, except Miss Paton as was, in ‘ *Hartaxerxes.* ’ Did you ever ear Miss Paton sing ‘ *Fly, soft hidears, fly* ’ ? ”

Sir Frederick, with an irrepressible smile, answered in the negative ; and, amused up to the point of possible amusability, in his actual state of temper, by the demonstrative communications of these stranger ‘ *Pilgrims of the Rhine,* ’ he left the daughter and father disputing on the respective merits of Charley Dignum and Miss Paton, and went forward to listen to the pleasant music of the little band, which recalled, in the airs they performed, some impressions of his early boyish travels.

The woman was singing, with more taste than science, to the accompaniment of her harp, the French melody ‘ *Loin du chalet.* ’ The Italian exile was murmuring a *sotto voce* second, and repeated with much energy the *refrain* ‘ *Oh ! ma patrie.* ’ The cloaked and hooded *Flamande* was drawing, on a card which rested on the volume of Pellico’s ‘ *Prigioni ;* ’ and her companion was talking to Fegan in broken English. The group was picturesque, from the contrasted variety of the figures, faces, and costumes that composed it.

Meantime, the swampy banks of the canal near Ostend had been gradually exchanged for scenes of more broken and woody outline ; the country rising into highly cultivated ridges on either side. As Bruges was approached, rural prosperity and beauty became more striking. Snug cottages and substantial farm-houses, deeply coloured, as in a Dutch picture, peeped through trees, and presented images of comfort and ease which, throughout even this, the flattest part of Belgium, amply compensate for the absence of the more striking features of mountain countries. On some spots the hay was still making, and sent forth its perfume on the air ; and wherever man appeared, his fresh colour and decent garb betokened the full suppliance of the first wants of life.

A little further on, the *treckschuyt* drew up for a moment near a garden gate of an extremely neat *campagne*, and took in two gentlemen. They swept the decks with their hats; and their low bows were returned by salutes from the Flemish party in the boat with equal courtesy. One of the strangers took his place with his face turned towards the town, and his hat drawn down to shelter him from the oblique rays of the sun: he was of the middle age, Flemish-built, full and comely. His companion was a young man of a lively and interesting appearance, and might have belonged to any country. Their conversation was carried on in French, which, by its context, revealed that they were evidently inhabitants of Bruges or its neighbourhood, and were returning at that early hour from a dinner-party, at the villa of a friend, to the town.

There was something in all this, that recalled the social habits and rational hours of the middle classes of England of older times, almost refreshing to one *blasé* by the enfeebling and corrupting usages of his own class and day; and Sir Frederick, after an effort in his own shyness and reserve, was tempted to seek an opening to intercourse by asking the period at which the canal from Bruges to Ostend had been cut. The two Flemish gentlemen turned round, and, bowing as Flemings only bow, seemed eager to reply.

“It was constructed” said the elder of the two, “in 1613, and is a little monument of what even a transient peace of twelve years can effect,—a pause during that sanguinary period of European history, in the seventeenth century. You remember, doubtless, sir, the truce so long desired between Holland, Spain, England, and France?”

Sir Frederick nodded an equivocal assent, and endeavoured to ‘rub up’ his recent readings.

“Yes,” said the young man; “it was a *trêve de Dieu*, to give the despots of Europe time to breathe, and think of new modes of oppression and violence. A pretty set they were! Your James the First, monsieur, false to his allies, like a true Stuart! Louis the Thirteenth, or rather his minister Richelieu; Maurice of Nassau, who was mystifying the Dutch, and planning the murder of that glorious patriot Olden Barneveldt; and Philip the Third, of Spain, the worthy successor of the monster Philip the Second, who then ruled over the blood-steeped and smoking ruins of Flanders and

Brabant, in the person of his viceroys, the Archdukes (as they were called) Albert and Isabella;—glorious times those!” A murmur of assent followed this speech.

“It was a great epoch for us,” said the elder gentleman. “We were handed over, to be sure, from bloody Spain to leaden Austria: but Albert and Isabella were like the princes of fairy tales, *‘de bons princes;’* so we began to labour in this pause of peace in repairing the ravages of war: agriculture revived, roads were opened, canals were constructed; and though our ancient city of Bruges had then no court, and had lost the early splendour of her commerce, still the minor operations of trade renewed their activity; and the reviving prosperity of the country is yet visible in many monuments of utility and civilization.”

“*Eh bien! monsieur,*” said the younger patriot, “I trust the five great powers of the present day will let us breathe a little now, and give us time to recover. Nations are always for peace when left to themselves; but kings, and those who minister to kings, seldom leave them the choice.”

Sir Frederick, interested in the conversation, observed, “I believe England concurs fully in the wish for peace. All parties with us agree, that it is the interest of Europe to maintain it.”

“To be sure,” observed the young and animated Fleming. “Look around you, sir; look at those lovely orchards and beautiful gardens; they are the work of persevering Flemish industry, raised on artificial soils! It would be a pity to see the labour of years ravaged by war, *n’est-ce pas, monsieur?* Yet, sooner than forfeit our national independence, which we have so hardly conquered, we are ready to fight the battle over again to-morrow.”

“*Jour de Dieu!*” said another Flemish gentleman, “you are quite right! If we are to be free, we must be prepared for the cost; for right is too often with the strongest. *Le bon Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons,* as Spain and Austria found in our unfortunate country, in other times.”

The setting sun now fell in showers of gold on the Gothic towers of Bruges, and they were reflected in bright points from their golden fanes and moulded casements.

“What a splendid picture!” said Sir Frederick.

“Yes,” said the elder of the two last arrivals; “it is well cal-

culated to make an impression on those who are not, like myself, deprived of the organs of vision."

Sir Frederick started: and looking under the broad hat of the last speaker, perceived that he was indeed deprived of sight.

"That high belfry," continued the blind gentleman, "is the *clocher de Notre Dame de Bruges*, one of the loftiest in Flanders. We see it at sea, and it directs the vessels into the port of Ostend."

"The view is indeed splendid," said Sir Frederick Mottram; "but one always fears that the illusion will be dissipated, on entering these ancient towns. It generally is so in Italy, where the towns are perfect disappointments."

"Those of Flanders are the reverse," said the young Brugeois: "the domestic architecture of the middle ages in the Netherlands is the most perfect and picturesque of Europe. Flanders was the cradle of the arts; but though our national rulers, our *Comtes Grands Forestiers* and Dukes of Burgundy, were magnificent patrons, it was the merchants and tradesmen of Bruges who raised those beautiful edifices which, if you have any taste for such pursuits, you will be delighted to examine."

"The arts are almost the only subject that interests me very much," said Sir Frederick, with some emphasis.

"*Monsieur est-il artiste de profession?*" said the black-hooded lady, putting the card on which she had been drawing into her book.

"Only an amateur, madam," he replied, a little hurt at being taken for anything professional.

"*Eh bien!*" she continued; "look before you! There is one of those originals from which our Flemish painters might have taken their subject. There is the *chiaro oscuro* of Hobbima, in which he equals Ruysdael. There are his deep masses; and there his setting sun, in which he rivalled Claude. Those trees have his feathery but firm touch; and the whole distribution of light and shade is his! Our Flemish painters all studied in the great school of Nature, and Hobbima most of all."

"*Madame a raison!*" said the young Brugeois. "It is to that circumstance our school owes its immortal freshness. . . ."

"The absence of all mannerism," said the lady, "and the truth that belongs to all ages."

“ To what, then,” said Sir Frederick, “ do you attribute the decline of your school ?”

“ To war, sir,” replied the young man : “ the restless wars of France, Austria, and Prussia stopped their progress in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. For thirty years, music was thus stopped in Germany ; war rendered music stationary in France, till Rossini and the new Italian school were permitted to revive the art ; nor would Belgium have been compelled to borrow from other countries that divine art in which she once herself excelled, had she not been always involved in contentions in which *she* had no interest.”

“ But you have had fifteen years of peace in Belgium,” said Sir Frederick.

“ Fifteen years of discontent and brooding vengeance,” replied the young man, with fire. “ The arts must have encouragement ; genius must have its recompense. Genius, *qui marche à l'égal des souverains*, must still eat. But under the Dutch government, *figurez-vous !* William considers the arts merely as an inferior branch of industry. Painting and music !—bah ! the Arcadia of William was a manufactory, and his Magnus Apollo *un bon gros fabricant* ; the clacking of looms was his music, and the workshops of Ghent his Olympus.”

There was a general laugh among the auditors, among whom there was not, it appeared, a single Orangist or partisan of the Nassaus.

“ Yes,” said the blind gentleman, “ we Flemish are all born artists, I believe, if circumstances favoured our talents. When Guicciardini visited us in 1567, he observed, (I beg pardon for quoting our own translation,) ‘ *Les Belges sont les maîtres de la musique, qu’ils ont fait renaître, et qu’ils ont portée à un grand point de perfection. Ils naissent avec un génie heureux pour la cultiver.*’ ”

“ Without that *génie*,” said Sir Frederick, insensibly interested in the discussion, “ a nation may buy artists, as England does, but she never will be musical. I am ashamed to say, that, until now, I was ignorant that the Belgians were a musical people.”

“ *Comment, monsieur !*” said the lady, brusquely. “ Do you not know that the founder of the present musical system was a Belgian, who added the seventh note, and divided the scale into oc-

taves—Henri de Put? And then there was our Rowland Lasso, of Mons : the Italians call him *Orlando di Lasso*. Then there was *Tinturier de Nivelles*; besides Deprès of Antwerp, who invented counterpoint, in the sixteenth century. And, in modern times, have we not Méhul, Berriot, and the divine Grétry of Liege?"

The Flemish lady then whispered something to the harpist, and she struck up '*O Richard, ô mon roi.*'

"Bravo! bravo!" was echoed on every side.

"*La belle musique!*" said the blind gentleman, humming the air to the harp.

"*Oui, oui,*" said the younger speaker. "*You* knew Grétry, Monsieur Rodenbach; and the amateurs of the day preferred him to every one. *Mais nous autres jeunes gens*, we prefer the *Bra-bançonne. Chantez-la, ma bonne amie.*"

The harpist struck a few chords, and then sung as follows :

Qui l'aurait cru! de l'arbitraire
Consacrant les affreux projets,
Sur nous de l'airain militaire
Un prince a lancé les boulets.
C'en est fait! Oui, Belges, tout change :
Avec Nassau plus d'indigne traité!
La mitraille a brisé l'Orange
Sous l'arbre de la liberté.

Et vous, objets de nobles larmes!
Braves, morts au feu des canons,
Avant que la patrie en armes
Ait pu connaître, au moins, vos noms!
Sous l'humble terre où l'on vous range,
Dormez, martyrs! bataillon indompté!
Dormez en paix, loin de l'Orange,
Sous l'arbre de la liberté!

The enthusiasm produced by this national hymn was a proof how far constitutional phlegm may yield to the excitement of circumstances. In the plaudits which followed, there was more of the mercurial temperament of the French, than of the supposed sobriety of the Flemish, character.

It was remarkable that, during the performance, the Italian exile sat with his face buried in his hands, and alone gave no outward token of sympathy with the cause. *He* was haply comparing the revolution of Belgium with the fruitless struggles for Italian liberty of which he was a victim. He had a brother in the dungeons of St. Angelo, and he was himself dead in law,—in poverty and in banishment. For Belgium, circumstance had done much; while every chance had turned against his own country. The blood of many of the best sons of Italy had stained her soil; while others, dispersed and lonely, brooded, like himself, beneath the chilly skies of the north, over the disappointment of their patriot hopes. How then could he sympathize where all was triumph, activity, and hope, and success!

The little bark was now passing through the *Franc de Bruges*, whose every inch of ground recalled the unsubdued spirit of the Flemings of the middle ages.

“It was here,” said the young Belgian, “that the tree of liberty was planted and nourished in the fourteenth century. When the Comtes des Flandres endeavoured to extend an unmixed despotism over the people, the cities, to strengthen themselves, endeavoured to obtain a mastery over the surrounding country: but the population of the *Franc de Bruges* threw off the yoke of both, and obtained for it great privileges: it was ruled by its own magistrates, according to its own laws; and took a place among the *États de Flandres* as an independent power.”

“Let us hope,” said another passenger, “that the spirit of the ancient times is not extinct.”

It was now very evident that the Flemings were desirous of impressing their English fellow-travellers with a conviction of the perfect success of their revolution and its consequences; and Sir Frederick Mottram was slowly yielding himself to a cause for which he had hitherto felt no interest, through the medium of his imagination. The arts were mixing themselves with his political opinions: Hobbima, and Grétry, and the *Brabançonne*, presented a neutral ground, where Fancy, like Archimedes, might fix her levers, to move the world of prejudice in which he had hitherto lived. He was beginning to feel for Belgium; and feeling is a powerful step to conviction.

On arriving at the port of Bruges, which is without the city, and a

short distance from its gates, there was a general flutter and fuss. The acquaintanceship of the voyage was at an end ; and self resumed the influence which it usually exerts in such situations. Each was busied in pursuit of his own objects ; and boxes, bags, and carriages superseded every other consideration. Already had Fegan taken the command of a company of three *barrows*, engaged by him to take his two carpet-bags into the town ; and he was haranguing the porters in his best English, respecting the rank and importance of his master, whose carriage, he said, was following him, when Sir Frederick prepared to use his own legs, and proceed on foot to his inn. He had, however, attracted the attention of the young Brugeois, who now approached him with offers of service ; first recommending, and eventually conducting him to the Hôtel de Commerce, one of the best, cheapest, and perhaps most ancient hotels of the Flemish territory.

“ You will surely remain a day or two in our city, monsieur ? ” he observed, as they walked forwards.

“ Is there anything to see in it ? ” was the languid reply.

“ *S'il y a quelque chose à voir !* ” said the young man, in an accent of surprise. “ There is our superb Hôtel-de-Ville ; and our *Prinsenhof*, the ancient palace of the Counts of Flanders. The room is still extant where Philip le Bel, the father of Charles the Fifth, was born. Then there are the church of Notre Dame, with the mausoleum of Charles le Téméraire and of Mary, Duchess of Burgundy ; the Musée ; the Botanic Garden ; the Academy of Sculpture and Painting ; and, above all, the house where your Charles the Second resided, when he was our *Roi des Arbalétriers*. But, with your permission, I shall have the honour of waiting on you to-morrow. Unfortunately, I am engaged to a *concert d'harmonie*, given by our young amateurs this evening ; *ainsi, au plaisir*. ”

He gave his card, on which was written—‘ Mons.—, Docteur en Droit ; ’ and then bowed off.

It was not till after a solitary, but sumptuous eight-o'clock dinner, to which the host of the Hôtel de Commerce gave the name of supper, that the weary, but not unsatisfied, English traveller remembered a card which he had picked up near the little port of the canal, and which he had thrown on the table of his room on arriving. It contained a slight but admirable sketch of the group on

board, which had struck his own pictorial imagination;—the melancholy Italian, the joyous Flemings, the placid English, and, distinguishable above all, his own fine figure and handsome head! Notwithstanding the miniature size of the drawing, the expression of his countenance was preserved with a characteristic fidelity almost epigrammatic. The regular features were touched with morgue, and tinged with discontent; and the figure was defined with a precision of symmetry and proportion, peculiar to the English toilet, and illustrative of the minute observations of the artist.

“What a splendid talent!” he said, his eyes riveted upon his own resemblance. Both the Italian exile and the Flemish lady had been occupied with drawing; but the *amour-propre* of Sir Frederick at once assigned the sketch to the female artist. There was something of female tact in its attention to details; in the wooden waist, buskined ankle, short petticoat, and sticking-out elbows of Miss Susan Tyler; which, with the father’s back, the brother’s chubby cheek and gingerbread, were touched into the back-ground in lines of humorous caricature. Sir Frederick was desirous not again to meet the fair artist, lest he should be obliged to restore a work that was so perfect an illustration of his pleasant and amusing passage from Ostend to Bruges, and which included the best likeness of himself in miniature that ever was made, though he had sat to Isabey, and been enamelled by Bone.

CHAPTER X.

BRUGES.

FROM a deep and healthful slumber, such as the over-worked man of office never knew, Sir Frederick Mottram was suddenly awakened, on the morning after his arrival at Bruges, by sounds of an unusual and an astounding effect. The great bell of the church of St. Jacques, close to the Hôtel de Commerce, was tolling loud

and perseveringly; while, within the walls of the court, shouts and peals of laughter were heard, mingled with what seemed a clashing of arms; which rendered it doubtful whether the untimely tumult proceeded from a sudden revolutionary movement, or was only consequent on the celebration of some domestic festivity, such as the Flemish Kermess, that frequent bane of the traveller's repose throughout all parts of the Low Countries.

Sir Frederick rose, threw open the window, and beheld a ghastly figure, larger than life, stretched on the cross; its head bent down, its hair dishevelled, and its face covered with drops of blood. Preoccupied, and only half awake, it was some moments before he convinced himself that the frightfully awful image was no reality; that it was one only of those terrible representations, which a prostrating system of superstition had multiplied throughout the Low Countries, and which still remain, to mark the lingering of Spanish bigotry, and to demonstrate the strange inconsistency of man, even in his greatest efforts for reformation.

The spectacle, in his imagination, was profanely offensive. He turned away, and from another window, having a different aspect, he beheld a group of revellers advancing towards the house. It seemed a sort of bacchanalian rout, composed of both sexes, armed with every species of implement that a well-furnished *batterie de cuisine* could supply. A band of music followed in the train; while in front moved a tall, grotesque figure, bearing a gridiron, and crowned with gaudy flowers, whose grave but humorous countenance was the object of universal attention. This personage was Lawrence Fegan! For frolic or for row, Fegan, in virtue of his Irish temperament, was alike prepared; and 'equal to both and armed for either field,' he might either have engaged himself in the out-burst of another four days; or only taken the lead of the Belgian mob, in the mere spirit of fun and festivity. Shouting and yelling, the party continued its march, and entered into the back part of the spacious and straggling hotel.

Sir Frederick dressed himself with celerity; and, hastening down stairs, found that the large and handsome kitchen, which he had admired, *en passant*, on the previous evening for its order and cleanliness, was now the scene of festive confusion. The votarists, who had been thus 'thanking the gods amiss,' were in the act of

arranging themselves round a profusely spread table, at the head of which sat Fegan, in his figure and costume a copy of the picture of *St. Lawrence* broiling on his own gridiron, which hung over the kitchen chimney.

Fegan saw, and rising respectfully, approached his master, pulling the forelock of his laurel-crowned brow, and scraping a bow.

“What does all this mean?” asked Sir Frederick.

“It manes, plaze your honor,” said Fegan, half tipsy and wholly confused, “that I am *St. Lawrence* on the gridiron. I hopes your honor is not displazed, sir, in regard of its being the faiste of ould *St. Lawrence*, glory be to his name! And these are the raal Christhians, Sir Frederick; and a fine people they are,—and the gridiron, sir, and it’s being my own saint’s day, and namesake! Mrs. Cook here, with the curish dress and the gold bobs in her ears, has had the puliteness, Sir Frederick, to make me the king of the faiste, and had an iligant ball out in the *ramise*; and Mrs. Cook did me the honor to lade off with me, in regard of my name being *Lawrence Fegan*, like the saint’s, your honor; and that’s all, sir.”

Sir Frederick saw it was in vain to make any comment upon Fegan’s new vocation; who was besides, just then, too full of the *spirit*, to resist his own happy Aristippean adaptation to the novel circumstances in which he was placed. Satisfied that he was himself in no immediate danger of fresh annoyances from his servant’s genius for blunder, he returned to his chamber, leaving the happy Irishman *en possession*, to be pleased and to please, to the full bent of his festive propensities and saintly elevation.

Availing himself of that unusual advantage in the day of an Englishman of fashion, a long morning, he ordered coffee, and sat down to write letters of business, with their tedious and wearisome, but necessary details. Such details, however, were a relief in the existing temper of his mind; and the only themes to which his morbid feelings could bear to recur. They were mere matters of fact; and, unconnected with passion, they revived no heart-sickening associations, they awakened no recollections pregnant with humiliation, and they refreshed no ‘compunctious visitings of conscience.’

Horace Harvey and Mr. Harris, (the man of science, and the man of business,) the early connexions of his youthful and better life, were at the moment the only persons in England with whom he wished,

or could bear, to correspond. It was a new indulgence to revive his almost forgotten habits of confidence with the former, to detail the progress of his returning health and reviving spirits : it was a necessary and peremptory duty to address to the latter his intentions relative to his property, to consult him on letting his house in London, on parting with his villa near Richmond, and to give orders for preparing Mottram Hall for his residence, whenever he might choose to return to England. It was necessary also to make arrangements for the immediate reception there of Lady Frances, while still doubtful as to the steps he should eventually take in relation to her conduct and future position. Too indifferent for separation, too much irritated for reconciliation, he sought only for the present to mark his disapprobation, disgust, and contempt ; and a few cold lines, without date or place, were inclosed in his letter to his agent, to inform her of his decisions.

Yet amidst this dreary series of cold and flat realities, there fluttered an ideal and phantomlike reminiscence, which flung its dreamy influence over his more serious preoccupations : this related to the immediate and impelling cause of his almost insane flight from England. Who was the writer of those spellful lines, whose command he had almost involuntarily obeyed ; and what was the motive of her strange interference ?

Sir Frederick Mottram, like all of his temperament and cast, was a vain man : he was also a susceptible one. But political life, and a well-sustained ambition, that 'grew with what it fed on,' had saved him from the penalties of gallantry, to which his passionate and imaginative character might have driven him. An *engouement* for his wife's friend, Lady Montessor, and a caprice for his friend's flirt, Mrs. St. Leger, had acquitted him however, in the world's eye, from the imputation of a cold and stoical insensibility. But the private frailties of public men, if not always of short endurance, are most frequently sunk in higher interests ; and the great political epic, more especially, of which Napoleon was the protagonist, admitted no pause for episodes of gallantry in the career of those whose lives were in any way bound in the last scenes of his declining power. Still, the elements of passion were latent in the temperament of the politician ; and imagination lent all its colouring to the romantic and singular incidents which had led to his abrupt departure from England.

The great movement of the age, the mighty struggle for conquest between past and present institutions, had produced in England, as elsewhere, an under-current of female agency, in which religion and politics, the church and the state, sought alike to sustain their power and to advance their interests. In a moment of such crisis, no instrument was so humble, no means so indirect, as to be considered unsusceptible of advantageous employment : and it is the peculiar advantage of woman's interference, that its sphere of action is all-pervading, and that its applicability commences there where all other agencies have no *prise* or lever to act upon.

Women had, accordingly, again become the 'nursing mothers of the church;' and had even assumed the singular appellation of 'Churchwomen,*' as in the ages of the Theresas and the Catharines. They had also become stateswomen, as in the times of the '*Traité des dames*;' and some, taking even a higher flight, had plunged into the depths of mathematical science, or brought their subtile minds and eloquent pens to the profoundest discussions of moral and political philosophy, and to the propagation of doctrines which they deemed essential to the happiness of their species.

The restless and reacting spirit of priestcraft and sectarianism was not slow to avail itself of this new contingency ; and women were in various quarters actively encouraged to light up the dimmed fires of religious enthusiasm. The Jesuits had again their priestesses of the *Sacré-Cœur*; the New-light Methodists, their female missionaries and class-leaders. English women were openly preaching, or privately proselytizing, all over the known world. They had their temples on the soil of Brama, and their congregations in the forests of America; while other Guyons and other Krudeners were influencing the imaginations and passions of the higher classes of society at home. Was the *dévôte* who had lured Sir Frederick Mottram to the work-house, and pursued him to his own chamber, a disciple of Ignatius Loyola, or a follower of 'the good Mrs. Medlicot,' the saint in fashion of the London circles, and the object of his favourite aversion, no less than the Princess of Schaffenhhausen? The idea, sudden and absurd, provoked and irritated him ; and he arose to go forth and break through the chain of association, that was leading him back to

* A name applied by the late Bishop of London, to Hannah More.

scenes and persons which he had made such sacrifices to escape.

The morning was still fresh and early. Sir Frederick had already got through a world of business and an age of reverie; but he was still an hour in arrear of the rendezvous of his kind and self-appointed cicerone. He wandered forth, therefore, from his hotel, as chance directed.

The antique and sculptured character of Bruges (the cradle of those arts and dynasties by which barbarous Europe was first civilized) was well calculated to break through the workings of frivolous associations, and to replace the flutter of petty annoyances, the fastidious disturbances of an artificial and ultra refinement, by a reflected calm, and a borrowed repose. The exterior aspect of this town, the most perfect and picturesque monument of the great and free citizens of ancient Flanders, is in that respect irresistible; and in rambling on through the silent and solitary streets of the Flemish Florence, Sir Frederick felt his passion for the arts revive, and his mind resume something of the pleasurable and enthusiastic feeling with which he had, years ago, visited the long-buried glories of Pompeii.

Bruges, which had once held counters for the commerce of all Europe, and had formed a central point for the Lombard and Hanseatic cities, (where the Medici and the Strozzi met the merchants of England and Germany,) was now only trod by a few devotees, on their way to matins in the churches of St. Jacques and Notre Dame, or by two or three *Béguines*, in their singular habit, on the devious route of their multitudinous charities. As the English traveller stood in the Grande Place, admiring its magnificent and pictorial edifices, he rejoiced in the solitude which left him free to study the remains of an epoch so influential on the history of mankind.

The domestic architecture of the Belgian cities is unique, resembling neither that of France nor of Italy; for the sturdy race of the Low Countries, living under other institutions, were actuated by other wants than those which governed the victims of despotism in the rest of Europe. The Hôtel-de-Ville, that necessary dependence of a self-governed city, is, at Bruges, singularly attractive, as an evidence of the miraculous perfection to which the arts had been carried at so early a period as the fourteenth and fifteenth

centuries. Its exquisite incrustations of sculptured figures, its profusion of ornaments, are valuable specimens of a branch of the arts, hitherto insufficiently studied by the antiquary. They form a series of bas-reliefs, presenting curious portraits of historical characters, and preserving the costume of an almost forgotten population.

As Sir Frederick was busied in examining the almost endless details of this singular monument, a living figure moved towards him, that by its picturesque outline harmonized with the antique scene, and drew to itself his suspended attention. It was clothed in the mantle and hood of the Brugeois toilet, which might serve alike the purposes of devotion or of concealment. But besides something peculiar in the bearing of the wearer, sufficiently distinct to identify her as the artist of the *treckschuyt*, the singular and dumpy figure and white coif of the female who followed close upon her steps would have betrayed the fact. She carried a large clasped volume, which might either be the portfolio of the artist, or the breviary of the devotee.

Sir Frederick could not resist the desire of addressing the admirable designer of his own likeness. His graceful salutation, and gracious though reserved address, were scarcely acknowledged.

"I beg a thousand pardons," he said, "for this awkward manner of returning an object which I cannot in honesty retain, though it will be a sacrifice to resign it."

He took a card from his pocket.

"I picked this up on leaving the boat last night, and I believe I am correct in now assigning it to you as the accomplished artist who produced it."

The lady took the card without unhooding her head, and, placing it in the book carried by her attendant, replied in French, "Such sketches serve to embody some passing form or incident, which, at a future time, may enter into combinations of art; or I should press on you its acceptance."

"They serve also to evince," he said, "that true genius catches at a glance what study may labour in vain to master."

"They meet," said the lady, "more than their desert, when they succeed in pleasing the originals they represent; but," she

added, pleasantly, “ *l’amour-propre, qui aime les portraits*, is easily pleased, if it be but sufficiently . . . ”

“ Flattered, ” said Sir Frederick, filling up the momentary pause. “ I frankly accept the application : I *was* flattered. ”

The lady was now moving on ; but he made an effort to detain her, by inquiring who were the originals of the sculptured heads on the Hôtel-de-Ville, which presented so obvious an illustration of her remark.

“ The Counts of Flanders, ” she replied. “ Princes have more *amour-propre* than other men, and it is that which makes the arts their debtors. ”

“ And satire too, ” said Sir Frederick, much amused by the original reflections and pleasant manner of his fair interlocutor. “ If princes were more perfect than the rest of the species, the philosophy of liberalism would have nothing ‘ to prate about, ’ nor ridicule to attack. ”

“ Yes, it is some consolation, ” she said, “ that absolute power should, like the sublime, border on the ridiculous. Look at these grim crowned heads, with their jewelled caps, their balls and sceptres, and other tangible toys of royal vanity ; childish as they now appear, they were appropriate emblems of power when there was no public opinion to sway men’s minds ; and these barbarous chiefs did right to adopt them. But fancy a living king, in these times of intellectual preeminence, with his crown and sceptre, perched on a high seat ; or moving, like a king in a puppet-show, under his ponderous trappings, at the head of a dramatic procession ! Can you imagine any pageant more absurd ? ”

“ Humph ! I have seen solemn ceremonies, but not exactly in the point of view in which you have placed them, ” he replied : “ I have ever thought a coronation a most magnificent and imposing spectacle. ”

“ I saw the coronation of Charles the Tenth at Rheims, ” said the lady ; “ but France will never see another such, nor Belgium neither. The ‘ *Dio me lo da, guai a chi lo tocca* ’ times are over ; kings will no more be permitted to snatch their crowns from heaven, but must in future be contented to receive them from the people, as ours has done. You will however find, sir, in Belgium, images of another power, in our public edifices, (quite as well

worthy of attention as that of royalty,) the power of the nation.”

“ These barbarous ages, however,” said Sir Frederick, accompanying the lady as she moved slowly onwards, “ produced splendid specimens of human genius.”

“ Yes ; there were then omnipotent energies at work, of which this most ancient and interesting city is a monument. But those antique images have another interest, as marking an epoch in the history of sculpture. This edifice is of the early part of the fourteenth century, when the arts began to escape from the exclusive service of the Church, and when princes began to enlist them in their own : and so we come back again to *l'amour-propre qui aime les portraits*. Flanders, at the period when this edifice was reared, was the cradle of the arts ; she first opened schools for their cultivation. But the arts alone do not suffice to happiness ; and at that very period men were burned at the stake for dogmas, and tortured for opinions, which are now despised and forgotten. Yet the Flemings were not a cruel race. Even the domestic dwellings of our honest burghers bear evidence to their possession of physical sensibility. Here is one of the oldest houses in Europe. Look at its façade.”

They paused at the corner of the Rue St. Amand, which opens from the Great Square. The lady appeared all in the arts ; and Sir Frederick listened with equal enthusiasm.

“ Here lived your Charles the Second, in his proper vocation of a gay worthless profligate, amusing and amused. It was one of the happiest epochs of his unprofitable adversity. Our good burghers of Bruges created him ‘ *Roi du Serment de l'Arbalète* ;’ the only *serment*, perhaps, he never broke.”

Sir Frederick stood in apparent admiration before the curious old mansion ; but he was, in fact, more occupied with the cicerone than with the objects she illustrated.

“ If such things interest you,” she added—“ if memorials of your ancient sovereigns are consecrated in your thoughts, you should visit the *Groschen-hausen-hof*, the palace of the Flemish Counts of that name, where one of them received your Edward the First. It joins the church of Notre Dame, where we are going, first to prayers, and then to finish a drawing of the tomb of the last Charles Duke of Burgundy.”

“ To be conducted by such a guide,” said Sir Frederick, delight-

ed by the offer, “ is a great enhancement of the pleasure : none but an artist can well do the honours by the arts. ”

“ Yes, ” she replied ; “ to understand the arts thoroughly, one must have lived by them. That has been my case. ”

“ It is a noble career, ” said Sir Frederick.

“ That is according to the country in which it is pursued, or rather the state of society. ” She sighed—and there was a tone of deep melancholy in the accent in which she made the remark.—After a pause, she added—“ These are not times in which power seeks assistance from the arts to seduce and deceive the senses. They are no longer instruments of church and state craft, and their encouragement depends only on individual taste. I am now going to work on a private order of a very liberal nature. ”

“ And who, ” said Sir Frederick, eagerly, “ is the privileged person who has the happiness to employ such original genius ? To reward it is impossible. ”

“ For the genius, *passe* ; but the patroness is the Princess of Schaffhausen. She has employed me to make sketches of some of the principal monuments of Bruges and Ghent for her magnificent album. ”

Sir Frederick remained silent, till they arrived in front of the church of Notre Dame, close to which stands the old hotel to which the lady had alluded.

“ How very curious ! ” he exclaimed : “ what a precious monument of the domestic habits of Flemish antiquity ! ”

“ Yes, ” said the artist, “ the whole thing is a finely imaginative combination. But those marble steps, which English kings have trod, that threshold, where Flemish nobles received them, are at present passed only by the indigent and the humble. It is now the *Mont-de-Piété*. ”

She passed on to the porch of the church, and raising the curtain spread before its entrance, held it up for a moment, as if to give effect to the fine view disclosed within. There was a striking distribution of light, as they entered, flashing down the vast nave from the lofty windows, which left the massy columns of the lateral aisles in depth of shadow, and produced that *chiaro oscuro*, so favourable to the solemn perspective of a place of worship. A few dark figures spotted the checkered pavement, kneeling with arms outstretched

before the high altar, or prostrate beneath the image of the Virgin, which is ascribed to the genius of Michael Angelo. The sun played brightly upon the magnificent tomb of the last of the sovereigns of Burgundy : it called forth the lustre of the rich gilt and silvered bronze, and the glowing tints of the enamel, with which this most superb monument is ornamented ; while it threw into stronger relief the florid sculpture with which it is overwrought ; contrasting it strikingly with the severe and imposing architecture of the church itself.

“ The tomb of Charles the Bold ? ” said the English virtuoso.

“ No, monsieur—of Charles the Rash,” she replied. “ There is all the difference imaginable between those epithets. The bold found empires, the rash lose them. Between Charles le Hardi and Charles le Téméraire, there is the same difference as between Charles le Sage and Charles X.”

“ I stand corrected,” replied Sir Frederick, smiling.

In a whispered voice she continued (for silence and solemnity prevailed) :—

“ This tomb is a monument of two great events, the degradation of art in Flanders, and the political retrogradation of the people of the Low Countries. Between the architecture of the fifteenth, and the sculpture of the sixteenth, what a difference ! This gorgeous monument has nothing of the severe grandeur of the preceding age.”

“ It is, however,” he replied, “ full of rich variety and luxurious profusion of ornament ; and the effect of the whole is noble.”

“ Yes, it is noble,—royal ! It marks a careless expenditure of the labour of the people, for purposes of mere ostentation. As a work of art, it is far less beautiful than that little tribune of purest Gothic sculpture, which lies to the right of the high altar. Still, it is an interesting monument. In this mausoleum are mingled the ashes of the father and daughter, the last native sovereigns of the Low Countries, the last of the great Burgundian stock, Charles le Téméraire, and Mary Duchess of Burgundy.”

“ You call, then, the Burgundian princes, national ? ”

“ They were so in fact : the marriage of Philip le Hardi with Margaret Countess of Flanders, domiciliated the Dukes of Burgundy in the country ; and founded the only national dynasty Belgium ever knew, with the exception of the present. They were a fine race,

those Burgundians ! *les Hardis ! les Bons ! les Bels !* and *les Téméraires* ; but it wore out, like other races ; and the last of its representatives, the fair Mary Duchess of Burgundy, by her marriage with the Archduke Maximilian, brought the curse of Austrian and Spanish government upon the great commonwealth of the Low Countries. The son of this ill-fated match united in his person, as husband of the maniac Joan of Castile, the kingdom of Spain and the Empire ; and his successor, Charles the Fifth, dying mad and a monk, bequeathed the fate of Flanders and of Europe to the atrocious monster Philip the Second."

"What an inference may be drawn from this brief story ! " said Sir Frederick, thoughtfully.

"Yes, " she replied ; " a moral applicable to all ranks : in plebeian, as in royal races, an infusion of *mauvais sang* is equally fatal. The philosophy of motherhood, sir, is not yet sufficiently developed. Ambition, more powerful than even passion, directs the choice, where pride of alliance points. Old blood, old names, with what advantage are they endowed over other old things ? "

"Oh ! none—none whatever, " was the vehement reply.

"When the foolish and the fragile, " she continued, " are taken for the sake of the conventional influences connected with them, to the outraging of nature, and the sacrifice of the best interests of the remotest descendants. "

Sir Frederick only noticed the observation by a deep sigh. If it had not fallen from an utter stranger, he would have deemed it a personal epigram.

"That ' Crucifixion, ' " continued the artist, " has the air of Vandyke's school, and is thought to be his : but it is a poor picture. This ' Adoration of the Kings ' is ascribed to Rubens. "

"They are both bad, " said Sir Frederick ; " and when that is the case, of what consequence is it that the name of a great artist is affixed to the work ? "

"Exactly, " said the lady. " If you have any time to see pictures at Bruges, where there are so few worth seeing, visit the Church and Hospital of St. John, and see the works of Hemlink. "

"Hemlink ! I scarcely know the name ! "

"So much of what one sees depends upon the person who serves as a guide ; and you English have a conventional catalogue of the

arts, beyond which you rarely look. However, see Hemlink. Have you no one in Bruges to conduct you ? ”

“ Not one ; I cannot always expect to stand so largely indebted to accident as on the present occasion. ”

“ What ! have you not the young Brugeois, the *Docteur en Droit*, who offered you his card last night ? The Hospital is, however, open to strangers at one o’clock. ”

“ Yes, I had forgotten that, ” said Sir Frederick, smiling ; “ and indeed everything else. ”

“ I advise you to see the works of Hemlink, ” was the vague answer : “ one o’clock is the best hour ; the lights are then perfect. ”

At that moment, the organ pealed, the officiating priests entered ; and the congregating of the devout, hurrying forward to the high altar, interrupted all further conversation. The artist and her companion were already kneeling on the steps ; and the English protestant turned, as if unwilling to behold a mind so brilliant submitting to forms so prostrating. Still he lingered behind, as if his sole motive was the examination of the various monuments of art with which the church abounds. A richly-carved pulpit, a sculptured Virgin and Child, a Nativity by Holbein, and a curious piece of very ancient tapestry, alternately arrested his steps. The last, with its golden arabesques, and bees, butterflies, and flowers, showed that the department of the arts of which it was a specimen had been brought to great perfection in the earliest ages of Flemish greatness : its date was 1450. When Sir Frederick found himself again near the high altar, the lady and her attendant had disappeared. He was disappointed, he scarcely knew why.

The Belgian artist occupied his thoughts as he returned to his hotel. He was displeased by the strong political colour of her opinions ; and by a certain pedantry even in her own professional observations, which smacked of provincial notability. This was doubtless the Angelica Kauffman or the Rosalba of some Flemish town. Her very pronunciation, though she spoke French with great purity, was *précieuse*,—an effort to keep down her guttural Flemish tones. He suspected, too, that her features did not keep the promise made by her conversation : for though he could not say that there was premeditated concealment, the Flemish hood was

never thrown back, and her age could only be guessed by the erect position of her graceful figure, and the alertness and *à-plomb* of her firm step. Still, without leaving any very gracious impression behind it, (for the name of the Princess of Schaffenhauseu had marred *that*,) the adventure of *la Grande Place de Bruges* was a link in a new association; and the Belgian *artiste* was not Mrs. Medlicot.

CHAPTER XI.

BRUGES.

SIR Frederick Mottram on arriving at his hotel, found, on inquiry, that *Monsieur le Docteur en Droit* had been twice there to look for him. He had left a written memorandum with Lawrence Fegan; but Fegan was not to be found. The courier of an English family, who was lounging in the court-yard, had seen '*monsieur le valet-de-chambre de milord*,' turn into the church of St. Jacques a little before; and there his master sought him. As he entered the fine old church, loud hosannas were rising to the glory of the Virgin, whose figure, in the full-dress toilet of Bruges, was borne under a canopy; but the first object that caught Sir Frederick's eyes, conspicuous above the figures that surrounded him, and close to the gaudily-robed priests, was Fegan, bearing a lighted taper in his hand, like the other devotees, towards the shrine, where Notre Dame de Bruges was about to be replaced.

Sir Frederick saw that it was in vain to contend with the powerful organ of veneration which had so suddenly and completely developed itself since Fegan's arrival in a Catholic country, where every image struck on his national susceptibility to all fanciful impressions, and roused his latent reverence for his national church. It was not clear that he had slept off the excitements of his recent canonization; yet, with every habitual desire to be annoyed by the negligence of

the servant, Sir Frederick found it impossible not to be amused by the absurd peculiarities of the man.

It seemed the especial characteristic of Fegan to disarm reproof by the exhibition of some eccentricity, which, in the extravagance of its act, or in the excellence of its motive, brought its excuse along with it. For the first time in his life, the haughty master of many servants was led to acknowledge their possible individuality. Accustomed to regard his domestics as machines mounted upon certain principles for his service, he had overlooked their moral characters as men; nor ever reflected that the *inconveniences* incidental to their administration, their follies, vices, and infidelities, were in part the consequences of that total absence of sympathy and communion with which English masters treat their domestics, — a trait unknown in the manners of other countries. The peculiarities and the humour of Fegan—his piety, vanity, gallantry, and blunders—had become too prominent, however, in his new and closer relation to his master, to be thus overlooked; and in forcing themselves on the attention of the English aristocratic gentleman, they gave a new idea of social organization to the British statesman.

When Fegan, therefore, had deposited his extinguished taper, bent his knee to the earth, blessed himself devoutly, and, dipping his finger in the vessel of holy water, sprinkled himself with its consecrated dew, he appeared in a different light, from that centaur, half man and half horse—an English groom; such as he had followed his master, in those long, silent, and uncommunicative rides along the parks and environs of the metropolis. A gentle reproof was all that he received for being out of the way: his answer was, as usual, evasive, plausible, and amusing.

“Plaze your honor,” he said, following his master out of the church bareheaded, “I put the young *Frinch* gentleman’s note into my pocket, in regard of being tould by a Sister of Charity (or, as they call them here, a Biggin) that there would be a rosary in honor of the Virgin (long may she reign in glory, amen!) she being an Irishwoman, Sir Frederick, from Dublin; for there is a convent of English and Irish ladies in the town; and a sermon will be preached by the abbess to-night—that is, the Abbé de Foere, who is at the head of them.”

Sir Frederick cut him short by taking the note, which Fegan had

been seeking all over his person, and by desiring him to be ready to depart for Ghent at two o'clock. The note gave Sir Frederick *rendez-vous* at twelve, in the shop of Monsieur Bogaert Dumortier, *libraire, au coin de la Grande Place*. He was pleased by the *apropos* : he wanted some books on local subjects ; and he had learned, on former occasions, what curious things are occasionally to be picked up in the provincial booksellers' shops.

Nothing could less resemble the shop of a London bibliopole than this tranquil and studious magazine, where Monsieur Bogaert, though a bookseller, was, strange to say, reading behind his own counter. His son and daughter, with Flemish faces like his own, were severally employed in the shop ; the one at her embroidery, the other copying an engraving of Rembrandt's. A gentleman, of prepossessing appearance, was making some research in a folio volume at another counter.

The appearance of the distinguished stranger exchanged the calm of their occupation for the bustle of business. The young *Docteur* entering almost at the same moment, assisted Sir Frederick in examining the contents of the counter. All the newest publications, French, English, and German, were there—*contrafactions* from Brussels, * selling at a quarter of the English, and a half of the French, prices. He asked for some work relative to the country.

“ Some specimen of our national literature ? ” asked Monsieur Bogaert.

The young Brugeois observed a smile which curled the English traveller's lip, at the idea.

“ We are beginning to have a national literature, ” he said. “ Here is ‘ *Les Gueux des Bois*, ’ and here ‘ *Les Gueux de Mer*. ’ Here is ‘ *Herman, ou Civilisation et Barbarie*; ’ and above all, ‘ *Philippine de Flandres*. ’ They are all national novels. ”

“ But French productions, ” said Sir Frederick.

“ Excuse me, they are Belgian ; nay, more, written here in

* Literary property is deeply injured by the increase of this foreign piracy ; and it has become vitally essential to put a stop to the practice. Unless, however, those interested will press the subject on public attention, it is absurd to expect that any ministry will take the trouble to effect the necessary change in international law.

Bruges. The author, Monsieur Moke, has not left the shop ten minutes," said the *libraire*; "he has stepped in next door, to attend a sitting of the *Société de la Littérature Nationale*."

"And the subjects?" asked Sir Frederick.

"All intimately connected with national history," replied the Brugeois.

"You have not been long in starting this new career;—I never heard of Belgian literature before."

"The reason is obvious," said the gentleman who had been reading, and who now came forward: "we have never been a nation since the European intellect took that direction to which the term literature has been applied. In the time of our greatness and prosperity in arts, commerce, manufacture,—a time when England was still dark, barbarous, and feudal,—Belgium had her master-minds, and her great names to cite in war, enterprise, statescraft, painting, music, and science; but just as literature was about to appear, we were overwhelmed by masses; and our country has been, ever since, merely a field on which the great powers of Europe have fought their battles. The days of complaint are now, however, over. We have recovered our independence; and we hope to maintain it, intellectually as well as politically. Short as has been the new era, we have already many proofs both of the power and the will to make this effort. Monsieur Bogaert, pray show Monsieur Nothomb's work."

"*Quel bel ouvrage!*" said the young Brugeois.

"It is the work of one of our young statesmen," added the stranger: "there is nothing better calculated to enlighten a foreigner (whatever may be his intellectual calibre or opinions) on the Belgian revolution, its grounds, its principles, its expectations, and its claims upon the approbation and support of civilized Europe."

Sir Frederick bowed his thanks, and ordered the book to be put aside for him, as he fluttered over its leaves.

"And '*Les Épisodes de la Révolution dans les Flandres*,' Monsieur le Docteur?" asked the bookseller, with a significant smile, as he presented a small volume to Sir Frederick, bearing the title of '*Épisodes de la Révolution dans les Flandres, par Constantin Rodenbach, Membre de la Chambre des Représentans, ancien Député au Congrès National de la Belgique*.'"

“ This comes well authenticated at least,” said Sir Frederick.

“ Oh! it is a mere local sketch,” said the gentleman, slightly colouring : “ besides, the work of Monsieur Nothomb contains all that is worth knowing on the subject.”

“ I must have this, for the sake of the title,” said Sir Frederick. “ I am just now very much interested for your province of Flanders. Are these the only works on the subject of the revolution ? ”

“ Pardon me; there are hundreds. Almost every province has its episodes. Here is a succinct but admirable ‘ *abrégé* ’ of the Events of the Four Days—‘ *La Révolution Belge, 1830* ; ’ and here is a more voluminous and most graphic production—The ‘ *Esquisses Historiques de la Révolution de la Belgique*. ’ ” The clever lithographic drawings, in which scenes the most picturesque were delineated by traits the most masterly, formed a remarkable feature in these volumes. “ If,” continued the stranger, “ the Belgians are not thoroughly acquainted with the motives of the revolution, and satisfied with its results, the press, at least, is not to blame. When a nation has great events to record, it seldom is deficient in historians.”

“ And yet Europe, or (to speak for myself) England, is very little acquainted with the causes of your revolution. When I was at Brussels, in the year Twenty-nine, it appeared to me that the Dutch King was popular.”

“ With those with whom you lived, monsieur, he probably was so. In all communities there are castes whose interests are bound up with those of the ruling power, be that power what it may ; and it has been generally observed, that the aggregate of English travellers are drawn, by a sort of natural affinity, towards them. Brussels, sir, has its Faubourg St. Germain, as well as Paris.”

“ I judge rather from my own observation,” said Sir Frederick, dryly. “ William of Nassau was at least calculated to be popular by his unceremonious and accessible manners. His exterior was that of a *père de famille* ; and he moved through your streets like a private gentleman. In exterior, at least, he was the *beau idéal* of a citizen king.”

“ Nevertheless,” said the gentleman, “ he was an absolute king, after the most approved model of the Holy Alliance. Affecting to be his own minister, he set all the forms of constitutional government

at nought. He made his will the sole law ; and that will was dictated by the local prejudices and narrow views of religious bigotry. Besides, he received Belgium as a dependency on Holland, as an increase of its territory ; and he has governed exclusively in the Dutch interest. He has violated our consciences, enslaved our education, silenced the press, corrupted the law, imposed arbitrary and unequal taxes, and loaded us with debt. He has imposed his language on our tribunals ; he has promoted Dutchmen to all places of trust and emolument ; and, in one word, has made us aliens in our own cities, and set a mark of reprobation upon every thing that is Belgian. How then could he be popular ? ”

“ We, in England, have been accustomed to regard these accusations,” said Sir Frederick, coldly, “ as enormously exaggerated.”

“ That is a question of fact ; and facts will speak for themselves,” said the Belgian gentleman, with equal pertinacity of manner. “ But as you have taken the trouble to come amongst us, and do us the honour to say you are interested in our cause, you will, I trust, inquire and judge for yourself. All we ask of strangers is to throw off their own prejudices, and not to adopt those of any fraction, or category, which is not the nation. Something, too, of our story should be known. We have always been a restless people. Through all our records, it is obvious that a sentiment of public justice is deep-rooted in our hearts ; and that there is nothing so galling to the Belgian spirit as *le joug de l'étranger*. Centuries of suffering have not hardened us to its bitterness ; for so strong is our feeling of national independence, that it has sometimes degenerated even into municipal jealousy.”

“ You think, then, that there is no chance of restoration for the House of Nassau ? ” asked Sir Frederick, interested by the warmth of the speaker.

“ None whatever,” was the firm and simultaneous reply of the two ardent Belgians. “ From the moment when its expulsion was voted in our national congress, its fate was decided. Even that indeed was but a form : the family had already been expelled by public opinion.”

“ The decision,” said Sir Frederick, looking at a vignette in one of the works, “ must have been an extremely poetical incident. Who had the honour of proposing the question ? ”

“ The course of events had already rendered the conclusion inevitable ; but the chance of the initiative fell on myself,” replied the interlocutor, taking off his hat.

Sir Frederick lowered his to the ground, surprised to find himself in the presence of one who belonged to posterity. He expressed his pleasure in the rencontre, with all the courtesy compatible with his own opinions concerning revolutionary men and revolutionary measures ; and requested to be favoured with a name so distinguished in the annals of the country. The stranger presented his card — ‘ CONSTANTIN RODENBACH, *Membre de la Chambre des Députés.*’ He was the author of the book Sir Frederick held in his hand.

A carriage now drew up at the door ; and Monsieur Rodenbach, after courteously expressing a wish to renew his accidental acquaintance on the arrival of the English statesman at Brussels, took his leave, and departed for the capital. Sir Frederick inquired with much interest concerning the person he had been talking to ; and he learned that Constantin Rodenbach was one of four brothers, the sons of a *bon bourgeois* of the little town of Roulers, near Bruges, who had all dedicated themselves to the service of letters and the revolution ; that the proposer of the expulsion of the Nassaus and the author of the Episodes had been an eminent physician, the author of a scientific work, called ‘ *Consultations Médico-Légales ;*’ that another brother, Colonel of cuirassiers, and Commandant of Brussels, was among the first to organize a company of volunteers, and to engage in hostilities, by a sortie he made to obtain reinforcements from Louvain ; that another is now Commissary of the district of Ostend ; and that Alexandre, the fourth brother, was the blind Deputy on board the *trekschuyt*, an ex-member of the Congress, an active debater, and author of an extremely agreeable and instructive volume, entitled ‘ *Lettre sur les Aveugles.*’

“ I wish Monsieur Jullien, our witty and liberal member for Bruges, was here,” continued the young Brugeois ; “ but you will see and hear him to more advantage in the Chambers at Brussels. We will now, if you please, proceed to our cathedral and our academy of pictures.”

“ I have already seen your fine cathedral, and under favourable circumstances. A lady artist, whom I had the good fortune to meet in the boat——”

“ Oh! yes, I remember,” interrupted the Doctor.

“ You know her, perhaps?” asked Sir Frederick, eagerly.

“ Not, at least, that I am aware of; for those cloaks in which our women muffle themselves, when they are no longer young or handsome, render it difficult to say who is beneath them. But pray observe, monsieur, the grace and coquetry with which our young belles fling aside their *envelope*. It is a study! There now, look at that lady! That is a true Bruges beauty with her Spanish eyes and Flemish complexion and *embonpoint*. That is madame — — ; she is called *la Vénus de Bruges*; and she is very like Rubens’s first wife. You perceive *she* does not muffle herself. Her hood only serves to set off her charms. She is going to her devotions: our ladies *du bel air* only wear their cloak when they are going to church.”

Sir Frederick was not surprised that his artist was set down as being, from the manner of her dress, neither young nor pretty.

“ I have been,” he said, “ but some hours in your town; and I have already encountered a beauty and a genius. Your women must be worth knowing.”

“ They will be by and bye; some are so now. They are all patriots: I don’t mean our old countesses of the Marie Thérèse school; but our women properly so called. The first rebuff which William got on his interference with our language, was from the witty and patriotic Madame de H——. It was on occasion of the King’s visit to Bruges, just before the revolution; when the order for substituting the Dutch language was rigorously enforced—(one of our bitterest griefs, monsieur). She had just returned from St. Omer; and the King asked her if the Flemish dialect was still spoken there. She replied in the affirmative. ‘ *C’est étonnant,*’ said the King. ‘ *Cela prouve, Sire, combien il est difficile de changer la langue d’un peuple,*’ was her reply. The hit had a great success.”

“ It deserved one,” said Sir Frederick. “ But how long has French been the language of Belgium?”

“ As long as we have been a branch of the Franc family. Since the fourteenth century, when the Dukes of Burgundy became our sovereigns, it has been the exclusive language of our educated society, of the arts, of literature, and of gallantry; and the language

in which a man makes love, monsieur, must always be a popular language. *Jour de Dieu!* Fancy a man making love in Dutch!”

They were now standing in front of the Prinsenhof, the ancient residence of the sovereign Counts of Flanders; where the princes of the house of Burgundy held their splendid courts, and where Philip, the father of Charles the Fifth, and Margaret, his splendid aunt and guardian, were born.

“This, sir,” said the self-appointed cicerone, “is the most ancient and curious quarter of our city. The Prinsenhof was, for a time, converted into an English convent. It is used at present as the *Salle des Hypothèques*, an apartment well worth being seen.”

They entered the singular and antique hall, the scene of so many courtly festivities during the middle ages. There, the knights of the *Toison d'or* were inaugurated, and the sovereigns of the Low Countries held their courts. The vast and sculptured chimney-piece, the massive *buffet*, and other monuments of by-gone splendour, which time had rendered poetical, were hurried over by the English virtuoso with less interest than he would have felt, had he not been impatient to reach the hospital of St. Jean at the appointed hour.

“Observe,” said his guide, “the beautiful *alto relievo* of this altar of ancient hospitality. The figures are executed in Italian alabaster. That head, in the centre, is Charles the Fifth. On either side of it are profiles of his father Philippe le Bel, and his mother Jeanne la Folle. Fine times those, when qualities were thus fixed upon princes, for the benefit of those who had not leisure to study character! Here too are effigies of Marie de Bourgogne, and her husband the pauper Archduke Maximilian. On the right, you see the features of Charles le Téméraire; and on the left, of Margaret of England, the famous Margaret d'Anjou.”

“This is a chimney-piece to read like a book,” said Sir Frederick, “and to study like a picture-gallery. It is magnificent and curious; but my time is limited, and there are pictures which . . .”

“Ah! Monsieur Imbert's collection, and the Van Eykes in our academy,—the immortal Van Eyke, from whom Italy borrowed the art of oil-painting!”

“I think,” said Sir Frederick, “Hemlink is the painter whose works were recommended to my notice.”

“ Then, sir, we must go to the hospital of St. Jean, and see the shrine of St. Ursula in its church, and the great picture in the hall. We have no time to lose.”

They reached the gates of the hospital as its bell tolled one. The Englishman felt as if he were keeping an appointment; but when he entered the small but antique chapel, it was empty, and silent.

The shrine of St. Ursula was a small and elegant coffer of the most beautiful workmanship. Its compartments represented the martyrdom of the saint and her eleven thousand followers, in a series of the most exquisite miniatures.

“ Women,” said the young Brugeois, “ were the true founders of the Church; and they are adored in their influence and their beauty by the remotest posterity. They have had the poetry of all ages with them.”

“ Yes!” replied Sir Frederick, laughing; “ and the passions too!”

A voice in an unknown tongue, thick, guttural, and discordant, called the attention of the irreverent votarists to the gallery of the church. A *Béguine*, in the full habit of her order, addressed herself in angry vehemence to the Brugeois. He bowed to her reprehension, and seemed to attempt an apology, in the same language, for disturbing her devotions and the sanctity of the place.

“ She is scolding us roundly,” he said to his companion, “ for talking so loudly within hearing of the patients. Above all, your laugh has displeased her. She called you, ‘ that English heretic,’ and thinks you were ridiculing the saint; and all this in such a Flemish idiom! *avec des Flandrecismes*, as untranslatable as they are *naïfs* and epigrammatic. I have softened her anger, by telling her that you have come to Bruges expressly to see the pictures of Hemlink,—the Raphael and Michael Angelo of the good Sisters of the hospital, which is taken care of by these *Béguines* or *Sœurs Hospitalières*.”

They now proceeded by an extremely picturesque court, whose Gothic buildings were covered by ivy and other creeping plants. Under the porticoes a few poor patients were enjoying the fresh air and sunshine; and several *Béguines* were moving about, enveloped in their large white coifs, and in the full folds of the voluminous

black serge, which confounds all symmetry, the young and the old, the bulky and the slender.

One among them, more grotesque than the rest, came forward with a bunch of keys; and was acknowledged by the reverential bow of the young man, as the *dévoté* whose idiomatic Flandrecisms had so much amused him. In the absence of the porter, she had taken upon herself to exhibit the pictures; and as she waddled on, she addressed a few words in French, with a strong Flemish accent, to both gentlemen, on the impropriety of laughing in a place of worship, and the inhumanity of disturbing the sick. While looking over her bunch of keys, she explained why she had taken upon herself to do the honours of the pictures.

“ *L’huissier,* ” she said, “ *est en voie, voyez-vous; un fier cadet, celui-là; un patriote, n’est-ce pas?—ça ne vaut rien: faites-nous une révolution, vous autres jeunesse!* ”

“ And you, my good mother, are not you a patriot? ”

“ *Eh! je suis Béguine! allez.* ”

She now threw open the door, after having fumbled for some minutes at the lock. She led them at once to the top of the room, and placed them, with respect to light, with a connoisseurship that was probably traditional.

The subject of this magnificent picture (by Hemlink) was a Nativity.* The beauty and expression of the heads, painted with all the *finesse* of miniature, notwithstanding the remote and rude epoch of the art in which they were executed, recalled the portraits of Vandyke, and, in some particulars, perhaps, surpassed them. The English virtuoso was surprised at his own ignorance of this great Flemish master.

“ What sublimity! ” he cried; “ what high intellectual character, in those noble but melancholy countenances! ”

“ *Oui-dà!* ” said the *Béguine*; “ strangers think that we can paint nothing but drolls and brawlers—*n’est-ce pas, monsieur?* But these are saints, true saints, *allez!* ”

* It is an unique specimen of fresco painting by a process which had ceased to be in vogue, even in Hemlink’s day. The colours were fixed with whites of eggs. His immediate predecessors, the Van Eykes, had invented the use of oil long before.

“ There was another picture, ” said the young man, “ by Hemlink, equally remarkable—St. Christopher carrying an infant Christ ; but the French carried it away. ”

“ *Laissez donc ces coquins de France,* ” said the *Béguine*, “ for finding out what is good : they go about rummaging everywhere. Not so *Milords Anglais*. This is the first English gentleman, in my time, that has visited our Hemlink or our Hospital. But our Hemlink was a great man. I call him ours, because he was *un bon et brave Flamand* of the *Franc de Bruges*, and lived in the village of Damme. He first took up a pencil, when he was a patient in our hospital. But monsieur is expecting somebody? ”

The observing old woman had caught the eyes of Sir Frederick, which were turned towards the door, as it creaked on its hinges.

“ I am all attention, mother, ” he replied, smiling.

“ I thought Hemlink had been a pupil of the brothers Van Eyke, ” said the Brugeois, “ who, with due submission to your great master, were the founders of the Flemish school. ”

“ Well, then, you thought wrong, ” said the *Béguine*, sulkily. “ Hemlink was his own master, as the story goes. He had enrolled himself a simple soldier in our troops, and fought hard, I warrant, for the independence of Flanders, against the Philips and the Lewises, until, worn out with fatigue, wounds, and what not, he came, poor, sick, and suffering, to our gates. Belgium had always her *blessés*, *voyez-vous* ! Well, here he was : the Sisters of St. Augustin showed the very ward and bed where he lay ; for we *Béguines* do duty here for sweet Jesus’s sake. The hospital, by right, is served by the *Sœurs Augustines* ; but they are now too few and scattered to do duty. John Hemlink, rest his soul ! recovered slowly, and was wont to sit under that portico where you passed the patients ; and he there began to draw little miniatures, and executed that shrine of St. Ursula, which people came far and near to see, till our little chapel became another Loretto. Who but John Hemlink now ! The town grew proud of him, and the magistrates gave him his *congé* ; and it was in gratitude for the charity he received here, that he painted this picture for our hall. And here, messieurs, he is himself—*quel joli garçon* ! ” She drew aside a curtain as she spoke, and the handsome head and figure of the painter, in the dress of the patients of the hospital, stood out

from its back-ground, and appeared almost to meet the admiration it elicits from the spectator. Underneath was inscribed, 'OPUS JOHANNIS HEMLINK, 1579.'

"What an interval between this 1579 and 1853!" exclaimed Sir Frederick, as he stood gazing on the fresh and noble picture: "What immortality of genius!"

"*Belle immortalité!*" cried the *Béguine*, contemptuously: and she turned away, and pointed to a series of most *rum*-looking portraits of doctors of the church, abbesses, and *Béguines*, which occupied the lateral walls.

"There," she said, "is the true immortality!—that of faith and charity."

There was one modern frame empty, and the Brugeois asked for whom it was intended. She replied,

"For a liberal benefactress, and one who, like the blessed Magdalen, had qualified for canonization, by passing through the world's slough. She is a friend of this church and hospital, and has lately given us a new ward. Her picture is at present varnishing by the artist who painted it."

"And who is the original so privileged?" asked Sir Frederick.

"The Princess of Schaffenhause. We expect her every moment," replied the *Béguine*, "on her way to Brussels."

The clock of the hospital struck two.

"You have not a moment to lose," said the young Brugeois; "our *treckschuyt* to Ghent is punctual."

"Is monsieur going to Ghent?" asked the *Béguine*, inquisitively.

"Can I have the honour of executing any orders for you?" asked Sir Frederick.

"I have just received an order to go there, myself," she replied.

In half-an-hour after the receipt of this information, Sir Frederick Mottram, Lawrence Fegan, and their two carpet-bags, were on board the *treckschuyt* which plies between Bruges and Ghent.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ORANGISTS.

DISTRUST, that almost ever dogs the stranger's steps in strange lands, vanishes before the evidence of an elegant equipage. Post-horses and bustling couriers are sureties accredited in all countries; and Goldsmith with his fiddle, Rousseau with his staff, or Homer himself with his lyre, would have a poor chance of welcome from any, the most hospitable Boniface in Europe, compared with that of the '*Milord Anglais*,' who finds everywhere the deference due to those, whose emblazoned pannels and numerous suite promise the sure and prompt payment of an overcharged bill.

Per contra, however, what traits of character, what points of local history, what national peculiarities and provincial absurdities, solicit the attention, amuse the philosophy, and awaken the mirth of the traveller who 'roughs it' on the road, as the mass of humankind are obliged to do! What information may thus be obtained of the state of a country (especially of a country still heaving with revolution), which books do not, newspapers will not, and tourists *en poste* cannot give!

Sir Frederick Mottram, who had never travelled but *en grand seigneur*, had retained the most wearisome impressions of his last journey to Brussels from Paris, when he had been shut up in a sulky *tête-à-tête* with the discontented Lady Frances, in one of Leader's luxurious travelling chariots. Arriving at their sleeping stations after dark, leaving before daylight, (as if lesser towns were of no importance, or as if time to them was of any,) and halting only at capitals, they took their political impressions from their ambassador's circles, and their glimpses of the arts and monuments from their *valet-de-place*.

Such recollections would probably have prevented him from re-

visiting the Continent : for if he had not now gone off at a tangent, it would have required something only short of a miracle to have induced him to return to it at all. Accident, however, had prevailed over prejudice ; and he was now thrown upon the Continent, under circumstances so different from those of his former journey, that Belgium might be considered by him as totally new.

Sir Frederick had been compelled to quicken his movements, in order to overtake the *treckschuyt*. His agreeable companion, after seeing him fairly on board, took his leave ; first, however, presenting him to a heavy, but honest-looking gentleman, who, he said, had taken an active and valiant part in the four great days of Brussels.

“ *Au reste,*” he added, in a whisper, “ the *treckschuyt* is freighted with Orangists ; many among them manufacturers of Ghent, returning with their families from sea-bathing excursions ; *et, jour de Dieu ! il y a de quoi faire une contre-révolution.*”

The bell for the departure of the *treckschuyt* now rang ; and the adieus of the Brugeois and the grateful acknowledgments of the Englishman were cut short.

After a brief exchange of courtesies with Sir Frederick, the Bruxellois who had been presented to him, threw round a reconnoitring look at the rest of the passengers ; and then, seeming to collect himself, took a packet of newspapers from his pocket, and buried himself in their perusal, as if to cut short all farther intercourse and conversation.

The Ghent *treckschuyt* is a spacious, gay barge. It was filled with passengers, male and female. Under an awning, spread over the quarter-deck, sat a most formal and silent circle of well-dressed dames. They were each the *double* of the other ; and might have passed for the originals of those broad-faced, full-featured women, who figure in the conversation-pieces of the Flemish masters. The men occupied the centre of the deck in detached groups. They were generally fair, fat, florid, and well-fed ; some with gold earrings glittering on their ruddy cheeks, and all with casquets or leather caps ; which, added to their jackets and trowsers, gave them the air of overgrown school-boys.

The prevailing physiognomy was that of the Saxon Englishman ; and the parties returning from Bruges to Ghent might have passed

for a cockney picnic, going from the Tower Hamlets to Greenwich Park. The Flemings are said to be of the same original stock as the English; and there is much in their appearance, habits, and language, to justify the belief. Even some of their phrases (for they chiefly employed the local dialect of the country) struck on Sir Frederick's ear as perfectly familiar; though he could not follow the conversation, which the party were keeping up with great vivacity. They laughed loudly, smoked cigars freely, gave each other punches in their fat ribs, and pats on their protuberant redundancies, with other manifestations of a good-humoured familiarity, more cordial than refined.

After a few abortive attempts to engage a conversation in French with the ladies, Sir Frederick took up a sketch-book which he had bought in Bruges; and endeavoured to amuse himself with tracing the likeness of a living, breathing Teniers, who occupied a place on a turned-up basket, at the end of the boat. It was an old woman, bringing with her a cargo of fruit and vegetables. She sat with her elbow on her knee, and her head on her hands. She had a pipe in her mouth; and her sharp eyes were fixed on the artist, in a full consciousness of what he was about, as one who had before served for a study.

But he could do nothing that pleased him. He was mortified to feel how completely time and the world had dulled his once fine perception of forms, and power of reproducing them. He remembered too his successes in early life at Rome, when he worked with Pinelli; and he contrasted in his memory the elegant and splendid impressions then received of the bright forms of Italy, with the hardier race that now surrounded him.

The country through which he was so leisurely passing, its scenes, its riches, its apparent tranquil prosperity, harmonized in all its features with the joyous, well-fed, and rubicund passengers. They were both true and genuine models of the Flemish school; and made at every step the panegyric of those great masters, who, beyond all others, were faithful to the nature presented to their study. The fertility and richness of the soil, increasing at every step, accounted for the robust appearance of its inhabitants. The tillage was admirable, the crops abundant. Farm-houses, neat cottages with their red tiles, green windows, and trellised vines and

hops, started up on every side ; little villages were grouped along the banks of the canal, at short distances ; and a peasantry, more grotesquely than picturesquely dressed, gave life to the home scenery, and afforded in their personal appearance a satisfactory indication of the total absence of penury from the land.

As the *treckschuyt* advanced towards Ghent, a succession of country-houses with pretty gardens presented themselves in all the lustre of evening sunshine. Here and there, the owners were leaning over their blossomed hedges, and saluted their friends on the deck ; while more than one master manufacturer stepped from his garden into the boat, to return to his factory in the town, after an hour or two of *villeggiatura*. His rural retreat, however, rarely assumed a higher appearance than that of the snug box of a London tradesman.

Something more than half-way between Bruges and Ghent, a little chaise came toddling down a green lane, and drew up on the canal. A brisk young man bounded out of it, and took his place on board. He had a packet of papers, tied with red tape, under his arm. His toilet was more Parisian than Flemish ; and a slight expression, not absolutely of self-importance, but an indescribable something in demeanour, stamped him obviously a provincial *employé*, a demi-official, or government man. An universal sweeping of the deck with hats, indicated that he was known to all ; and he had a *poignée de main* from one, a punch in the side from another, and a tickle in the ribs from a third. His arrival seemed to animate the conversation : questions and answers flew about in quick succession : here and there, the more significant words were dropped in French ; and by degrees that language was substituted for the Flemish, which had been hitherto preferably spoken. The conversation turned, as usual, on politics ; and the young *Employé* soon found himself exposed to the good-humoured railleries and epigrams of his interlocutors.

A remark by Sir Frederick, on the peculiar fertility of the scenes through which they were gliding, drew the attention of the *Employé*, who pointed out to his notice a farm to the left of the road, as an evidence of the fact ; and he entered into a disquisition on the general prosperity of the people.

“ No one, ” he said, “ can give you better information on

such subjects than myself : it is in my special department.”

He took off his hat, and bowed to the ground ; and Sir Frederick returned his courtesy in kind. After this mutual introduction through the agency of their hats, he continued—

“ From my official position, I can speak to the flourishing state of the fertile province of Flanders : let the other provinces answer for themselves. From this spot to Antwerp, through the Waesland (once a rank and splashy marsh,) it is all the same scene of abundance, the Canaan of the Netherlands : and when people have wherewith to eat, drink, and make merry, they will surely be contented with the free order of things under which they thrive and enjoy ; though particular interests, under temporary disadvantages, may lead a few discontented individuals to propagate feelings of dislike among those who have no cause to complain. ”

This was a palpable hit, and was returned by the droll of the party, a fat, fair young man, the very type, in dress and figure, of ‘ *mon petit Charles qui aime les plats sucrés,* ’ in the French farce of the ‘ *Rendez-vous.* ’

“ What is most miraculous in this state of prosperity, monsieur,” observed *mon petit Charles*, addressing Sir Frederick, “ is, that we are all starving in the midst of plenty. ”

“ You must not cite yourself as an example,” said the *Employé* ; and the laugh was again with him.

“ *Ma foi,* ” replied Charles, “ I live upon my means ; and it is not under the present regime that I grew fat. Though our soil be fertile, (which it is, in spite of all government, good or bad,) our manufactures and commerce are in ruin. The markets, open to us under the old regime, are now closed ; our ports are inundated with British goods ; and the manufacturing interests are sacrificed to the agricultural ; while our looms are silent, and our trade at a stand. ”

“ So much for the *matériel,* ” said a sturdy-looking cotton manufacturer, in whose firm the late King was supposed to have a large share ; “ and now for the *spirituel*. The country is governed by the priests ; and there is not an *aubergiste* in all Flanders who will dare dress you to-morrow (being Friday) a mutton cutlet, or a *cuisse de volaille*, under penalty of excommunication. The black beetles are creeping back into our houses, and getting round our wives

and daughters, just as in the old Spanish and Austrian times."

"Oh! as for the priests, I give them up, Monsieur Van B——, to your castigation," replied the government champion; "but remember, that their present influence is but a reaction on the intolerance and persecution of the late government; which forced the clergy into the ranks of political opposition, and, in making them partakers in our glorious revolution, bestowed upon them a well-merited popularity. The present government, moreover, is not answerable for the bigotry of our villages. Liberty of conscience (liberty the fullest for every possible religious opinion) is a fundamental condition of the Belgian constitution; and if the priests have power, it is the free gift of the people. The government do no more than administer a liberal dispensation in a liberal spirit."

"Liberal enough," reiterated Monsieur Van B——, shaking his fat sides; "for they leave us the liberty to beg or starve."

"Or even to attempt a counter-revolution," said the man of office, dryly; "or accept of missions from the Hague."

Here the conversation was interrupted for a moment by the ascent, from the cabin below deck, of a tall, dry, Spanish-looking person, buttoned up from head to foot in a grey great-coat, with a casquet on his head and a cigar between his teeth. He was evidently a person *d'importanza*, and was in fact a great landholder, the descendant of a Spanish family; as the Brussels merchant whispered Sir Frederick in broken English: interrupting for the first time his imperturbable silence. He was, he said, a great favourite with the hated Dutch minister Van Maanen; an ex-burgomestre of * * * *; and had held a handsome situation under the abdicated government.

"*Eh bien! monsieur*," said the Ghent manufacturer, addressing the hidalgo, "you have come on deck to smell your own orchards and hop-grounds *en passant*: they are really teeming."

At this moment the boat was passing an extensive and very elegant villa, with ornamented grounds.

"Yes, sir," he replied, with Spanish gravity; "they are mine to-day, but whose to-morrow? Every month now, it seems, must have its revolution; and where there is no security, property has but few charms for its proprietor. Besides, when a population of four millions is compelled to support an army of more than a hundred thousand men, the hops and orchards teem in vain: they

belong less to the nominal owners, than to the tax-gatherer. ”

“ That comes of the vicious policy of the great European powers, ” muttered the Brussels merchant.

“ But who exposes us to them? The European powers were with us when the House of Nassau occupied the throne, ” replied the *Ex-employé*. “ We had then the Bourbons for friends, Prussia for a kinsman, and the sister of the Emperor of Russia for our future queen, living in our capital and walking in our streets. ”

“ *Ah! parlez-moi de ça,* ” interrupted the Brussels wine-merchant, starting on his legs : “ if we had no other reason for the Four Days, the getting rid of the Russians would be enough. What did we want with the barbarian Autocrat’s sister? That Russian alliance was the *bête noire* of the Belgians. What liberty could be expected under a connexion which made Belgium a kitchen-garden to Petersburg, and brought Brussels within sound of the despot’s knout? But, thank God! we are ‘*quittes pour la peur*;’ and there is no danger now of hearing a Greek priest celebrating mass in the palace of our hereditary prince! ”

“ *L’un portant l’autre,* ” said *mon petit Charles*, while all seemed to smile at the Russian terrors of the good Bruxellois ; “ I think a Greek priest saying mass in the chapel of the Princess of Orange, is not worse than a Roman priest governing the cabinet of the King of Belgium, and commanding a majority in the Chambers. ”

“ And is that the case? ” demanded Sir Frederick, amused by the discussion.

“ To be sure it is, monsieur, ” said Monsieur Van B——. “ In the rural districts the franchise is so low, that the elections are in the hands of the peasantry ; who implicitly follow the directions of the priests, and return their nominees, to the exclusion of the informed and civilized part of the community. If things are to go on thus, we may expect a return to the awful times of the Philips and the Alvas ; and our children may live to see the Inquisition restored in the Grand Sablon of Brussels, and the fires of an *Auto-da-fé* blazing on the site of the Récollets in the Rue du Soleil at Ghent. ”

“ Then, ” said the Bruxellois, “ they will see restored what was never suffered to exist in Belgium ! for our priesthood never permitted either the one or the other to be established. ”

“ I should suppose that, with a protestant king,” observed Sir Frederick, “ you have little to fear on that ground.”

“ *Cela ne fait rien, monsieur,*” said Van B— —; “ the king may be a protestant, and his ministers *esprits forts*; but we shall not the less be the most priest-ridden people of Europe. We are all good catholics, sir, and we respect our priests at the altar; but we know that Ghent never flourished, since the middle ages, as it has done under a protestant king. William of Nassau never let an enterprising merchant stand still for want of a round sum to forward his speculations.”

“ *Eh! tant pis,*” said the Bruxellois. “ William was a sleeping partner in almost every concern that promised a profit; and both as prince and merchant, he clung to the false system of what is called encouraging trade: that is, giving unfair advantages to particular individuals, at the expense of the community; ruining the favoured, and forcing them into absurd speculations, by giving them a too facile command of capital.”

“ I cannot understand,” said the Ex-burgomestre, “ what the democrats of Brussels would have in their king. William was the very model of themselves, a pattern of economy; walking about the streets in a threadbare coat, and a weather-beaten umbrella under his arm.* Why, he sat for Monsieur Gobaud in an old pair of military boots under his royal robes, for want of a second pair to change them. Then he was always accessible: he talked and walked with his subjects, without form or etiquette. He listened to their complaints, entered into the details of grievances, and redressed them at once *de vive voix*, or by immediate interference with the ministers.”

* On this point, the testimony of an English aristocrat is somewhat different. Speaking of William's reception at Ghent, the Duchess of Rutland, in her ‘*Tour*,’ observes—

“ That popularity is scarcely worthy to be boasted of, the sum of which consists in not having been pelted with rotten eggs. The fact is, that the catholic city of Ghent was called upon to take the oaths to the protestant king of the Pays-Bas. The bishop of Ghent preached against the measure, and the consequence has been the dismissal of the bishop; but the city has not yet taken the required oath.”—*A Tour through part of Belgium and the Rhenish Provinces*, 1822.

“Woe to the nation where such things can be!” exclaimed the Bruxellois; “where the king’s cabinet is turned into a monkish confessional! The substitution of one man’s private judgment, for the determinations of responsible advisers, or for the established laws, smacks rather too strongly of the paternal despotism, as it is called, of Vienna. It is too clap-trap a virtue in royalty for less than a divine-righted autocrat; and shows either that William did not understand, or was not willing to perform, his duty, in the spirit of a representative government.”

This *boutade* produced a momentary silence.

“All this talks well,” said the Ex-burgomestre sulkily; “but the king you have chosen, monsieur, is not a bit the more popular for being a *roi constitutionnel*. There is no getting at him; or, if one does, *il ne cause pas, lui, comme l’autre—allez!*”

“The most popular of your princes,” said Sir Frederick, smiling, “was Guillaume le Taciturne!”

“But who wants a talking king?” asked the Bruxellois, petulantly. “We chose our king as an expediency; and, as yet, he has not disappointed us. *Il a du tact, le Roi.*”

“*Eh! diantre! oui—du tact!* But, with all his tact, his government has reduced the country to bankruptcy; and the manufacturers of Ghent are about to enter into a resolution to close their looms, and to turn adrift some thousands of their unfortunate workmen.—*Son tact, pardie!*”

“That is a dangerous experiment,” observed Sir Frederick. “The resistance thus raised against all government, by starving your dependants into riot, will fall heaviest on your own heads; and the effects of combination will be ruinous to yourselves, long before it reaches the objects of your discontent and aversion.”

All further discussion was now cut off by the arrival of the *treck-schuyt* in port; which was crowded with porters, wheel-barrows and trucks, and was noisy with family meetings and friendly welcomes. The courtesy of the political partisans was superior to the influence of a difference in opinion. All offered their services to the English stranger. But his young official acquaintance, being the only *garçon* of the party, made that circumstance a claim for taking him under his especial guidance; and they proceeded to the Hôtel de la Poste, entering the faubourg of the ancient capital

of Flanders in the last dim twilight of a sultry summer's evening.

Nothing could be more imposing than the appearance of the mouldering massive ramparts, the long dark narrow streets, the antique o'ertopping edifices, high dreary orchard walls, and close intricate passages. Here and there, a taper lighted before the shrine of a saint, or a *lampion* flashing its red flickering flame over the architectural portico of some government office, made the general gloom more dreary by their momentary contrast. Many little bridges were crossed, and many glimpses caught of tiny streams and stagnant canals ; while wastes and dead walls, as it seemed, in the very heart of the city, gave it a strange air of desolation, not altogether unlike that of a moonless midnight view of Venice ; for, like Venice, Ghent is a collection of islands,* connected by numerous small bridges.

Sir Frederick, arm in arm with his communicative guide, frequently paused to admire or to point out particular spots which recalled to him the broad touches and deep *chiaro oscuro* of the school he most admired.

"There," he observed, stopping short on one of the little bridges, "there is a picture at this moment, a very Cuyp ! The dark green waters, impending stone balcony, and massive ornaments sketched in strong relief below ; the distant broken arch, the boat fastened by a large iron ring to the ivy-draped ruin ; and the whole illuminated by the last western ray from the distant horizon, complete a picture, of which I could fancy I have a *fac-simile*. There is no judging of a school of painting till one has studied the *local*, and lived among the originals which have supplied the subjects."

"If monsieur is an amateur," said his guide, "he must see our Van Eykes and Rubenses, in the cathedral of St. Bevon."

"Your whole city," replied Sir Frederick, "viewed by this light, appears to me to be one great picture. How much one loses by travelling post through this country !"

The deep toll of a remarkably loud bell now broke on the general silence of the gloomy city ; and was followed by a quaint old carillon playing an ancient Flemish air, which gained on the listeners

* Formed by the confluence of the Scheldt and the Lys, the Liese and the Moere.

as they advanced, till they stood beneath the loftiest belfry of Belgium. It was a Gothic square tower, just touched at its top by a single ray of light. They stopped to look and listen.

“Our belfry,” said the *Employé*, “is the most ancient and national of our monuments. It was raised in 1183, to perpetuate the memory of the wealth, prosperity, and independence of the Gantois of the twelfth century. It is to us, what the Capitol was to the Roman citizen.”

“Quand notre cloche bat,
L’incendie va ;
Quand elle sonne,
Rébellion bonne,”

muttered a voice close behind them. They looked round ; but there was no form visible save that of a female, in the usual long cloak and hood, who passed on.

“An old adage of the common people,” said the Belgian, laughing, “which they love to repeat. This bell has been the tocsin of sedition in all ages : it is, in fact, the organ of opinion, as it has been the subject of popular poetry.”

Cutting across a dark passage to arrive at the hotel, they once again overtook the hood and cloak. The chill air of this gloomy alley made Sir Frederick sneeze.

“*Proficiat!*” said the woman, as they passed.

“*Ik bedanke het,*” replied the young *Employé*; while Sir Frederick was taxing his memory for a phrase from Erasmus, of familiar rejoinder.

“Do your common people speak Latin?” he asked.

The Belgian laughed : “No, no ; nor French neither, very generally or correctly. But a few phrases from the ritual are sometimes used ; particularly by our religious women, like that *Béguine* who has just passed. There are at present eight hundred of these good ladies in Ghent. This is their hour for going out to their pious vigils in the chambers of the sick. Nobody here can be ill without a *Béguine* to nurse him : there would be neither recovering *secundum artem*, nor dying in odour of sanctity, without their assistance.

“ It is odd enough, ” Sir Frederick remarked, “ that this is the second time, in my short journey in Flanders, that I have encountered one of these Sisters ! ”

“ Oh! you will meet them everywhere. They form a privileged and very circulating order : but they are good creatures , and very safe, though in a position to be mischievous. ”

On quitting the dark alley, they stood upon the *Place d'Armes* of the Flemish capital. Sir Frederick paused in surprise, to gaze on its beauty and gaiety.

The *Place*, called *le Kantur*, was a spacious square, planted with trees, and surrounded by noble edifices of the most picturesque architecture, interspersed with well-lighted *cafés*, fronted by awnings, like fantastic tents, spread before them into the street. In one corner was a theatre, with its usual accessories of light and bustle; and adjoining to it, a handsome building, announced by an inscription over its stone balcony to be L'HÔTEL DE LA POSTE. On the other side, was the *Caserne* of the *Corps de Garde*, red and smoky with lamps, and crowded with soldiers; while, under an awning in the street, a party of officers, in the handsome Belgian uniform, were seated round a table, drinking, and singing patriotic songs. The whole formed a scene worthy the pencil of Franc Du Châtel.

“ This is the *foyer* of the loyalty and liberalism of Ghent, ” said Sir Frederick's new friend, as they entered the *porte-cochère* of the hotel; “ and the only part of the city that is well lighted. But here is your inn. I shall do myself the honour of calling in the morning, and hope that you will stay a few hours to see what is most worth observation in the Flemish capital. ”

The gentleman then took his leave; and the English traveller, escorted by the hostess of La Poste, was shown, along an interminable corridor, into a lofty and spacious room. Fegan had arrived some minutes before his master, and was, as usual, flourishing away; but the *entrée* of the tourist with a single servant, and a truck laden with two carpet-bags, was anything but brilliant. There was, however, something in the appearance of the master, more than in the bustling insolence of his man, which convinced the proprietor of the hotel, of the policy of not inflicting upon his guest one of those ‘ *dîners inpromptu*, ’ pronounced by a gastronomic dictator to be ‘ *une noire trahison*. ’

The Flemings, like the Americans, do not love to be put out of their way; and the traveller who does not accommodate himself to their early *table d'hôte*, will often be disappointed in his fare. The English, however, who strive to bend everything to their own habits and usages, have somewhat accustomed the Flemish *aubergistes* to their nine-o'clock dinners; and when a party of sufficient consequence appears to warrant the inconvenience, the furnaces are relighted, and the *casseroles* recalled into service.

Sir Frederick was not therefore treated to the hard, *mille fois réchauffé fricandeau*, the exhausted *bouilli*, or burnt *côtelette*, eked out with a dozen unnameable and uneatable nastinesses, which usually form the supplements of such ill-timed refectations; and being refreshed and revived by an epicurean supper, he found himself in any disposition but that for sleep.

Among the old books which he had picked up in Bruges and which he had directed Monsieur Bogaert to pack and send after him, there was one which he had kept out to read on board the *treck-schuyt*. Its title was '*L'Ancienneté de Gand, par un Chanoine de St. Bavon*;' and he soon discovered that it was one of those delightful old provincial works, which have such a *goût de terroir*, and breathe of the *amour-propre* of the place they describe. It was all middle-age lore, the glories of Flemish art, and Flemish manufacture; and it brought into evidence forms and characters illustrative of the epoch, when Ghent was made the scene of some of the most important incidents in the great drama of the history of Europe.

To imaginative readers, such a work has a charm which must be felt in order to be understood; and Sir Frederick had already passed the midnight hour in its perusal, when his attention was called off by a musical voice under the balcony of his apartment, which gradually hummed itself away, and left again the ancient town to the silence it had momentarily interrupted. Every note and every word had fallen distinctly on the ear of the listener. The melody was new, but it resembled a polacca; and the language was equally strange to the auditor, although to him so many European tongues were familiar.

The song was still fading away, when Sir Frederick threw open the window and stepped into the balcony. The serenader was

gone ; and the measured step of the sentinel before the *corps de garde* alone was audible. The scene, however, had its spell ; and the traveller, as he leaned over the balustrade, enjoyed the balmy freshness of the air, already scented with the breath of morning. He gazed with an artist's eye on the scene before him, which lay in a deep repose of lights and shadows, at once a picture and a moral. The rays of a declining moon were still tinging the chiselled 'steppes' of the gabled façades, and tipping the architectural chimnies of the lofty edifices of the *Kantur* ; while the dim *échappées* of the narrow angular streets which straggled from it, gave a play to the imagination, and led it back to the glorious ages which had witnessed their construction. The whole brought graphically to the memory, events, whose results are still influencing the destinies of mankind.

THE KANTUR, the Forum of the capital of Flanders, now so peaceful and so picturesque, had doubtless been the site of many a tragic drama. Here might have passed incidents which had made epochs ; here had stood men who were themselves epochs.*

If the Low Countries had supplied the sturdy race which gave dynasties to Europe in the persons of the Clovises, the Dagoberts, and the Pepins, Ghent had given birth to him who united in his own person, the dominions of them all. One dark, narrow alley, now pierced by a straggling moonbeam, led to the ancient tower where Charles the Fifth first saw the light, and founded the power of the fatal House of Hapsburg. Yet he who broke down the gallant bearing of the Castilian spirit, and held the chivalry of France captive, had found his ambition checked in its mad career by the unyielding manufacturers of his native city ; and those '*têtes dures de Flamands*,' as the brilliant despot Philip le Bon of Burgundy had called them, had cost Charles more trouble to govern, than all his vast dominions in either hemisphere.

It was in such a moonlight night as this, that Charlemagne, who so long resided in this ancient city, might have dictated to his secretary, Eginard, some pages of his capitularies. Here the barber-minister of Louis XI., Olivier le Diable, may have played off

* The struggles of the Burghers for independence under the Heins and the Artevelde.

some of those buffooneries which made an essential part of his corrupting diplomacy. Here, too, Petrarch 'touched his lyre when he sung the charms of his Laura to the smiling banks of the Scheldt and the Lys.'

Sir Frederick Mottram was yet passing the antiquarian remembrances he had so lately acquired in review before his mental vision, when the voice he had before heard, again fell upon his ear. The book, which he held between his finger and thumb, dropped on the pavement as he stretched forward to catch the fading melody. A person of a tall and slight figure, set off by a military costume, came forth at that moment from under the avenue of trees, picked up the volume, and was met by Sir Frederick on the lower steps of the balcony with thanks and apologies, and with a slight complimentary allusion to the cause of the accident. The next moment the two strangers were walking together under the moon-lighted branches of the limes of the *Kantur*!

The historical spot on which they moved, and the melody which had introduced them to each other, furnished keys to the freemasonry of the imagination. If the accomplished English gentleman, with his innate love for the arts, so rare in Englishmen, was at once announced in the manner and bearing of Sir Frederick, there was a poetical halo about the person of his chance companion, which would have marked him, throughout Europe, for one of those splendid fragments of Polish heroism, now scattered over the world to glorify their own chivalrous nation, and to contrast their high and intelligent natures with that barbarous power whose brute masses had borne them down;—a nation whose gallantry Kosciusko illustrated, whose bravery Napoleon delighted to honour, and whose spirit the Russian Autocrat has found it impossible to bend, to break, or to extinguish, but with life.

Sir Frederick Mottram soon discovered that he was conversing with one of the most accomplished gentlemen of Europe. He was, in fact, one of the most distinguished exiles in the cause of Polish independence; and with others of his brave countrymen, had found an asylum in the capital of regenerated Belgium; being honoured with a post of military trust by its people-elected king.

Colonel *** had come to Ghent to visit an invalid comrade. He had only arrived an hour or two before; and was waiting for his

horses to return to Brussels that night. This restlessness in the *physique* of the Polish exiles, this morbid desire and capacity for fatigue and movement, is one of the surest marks of internal *malaise*, from whatever source it springs.

An introduction so accidental, so divested of all the forms which chill and impede the feelings in the ordinary intercourse of strangers, was not without its charm to the shy conventional Englishman. The melodies of modern Europe (a text derived from the Polish Hymn to Liberty, which the Colonel had been humming), Bellini's 'Norma,' the new musical school of passion succeeding to Rossini's school of brilliant and rapid sensations, the state of the arts in Flanders, and modern French and English literature (with the former of which Colonel *** was much better acquainted than the British statesman), formed the principal topics of a prolonged delightful conversation. Both parties seemed alike to avoid that fearful rock which makes shipwreck of all man's better sympathies—politics; yet, involuntarily, the all-engrossing theme, mixed up as it now is with almost every subject, gradually mingled with pleasanter matter; introducing Belgian prosperity, Polish misery, and the cause which had driven one as wealthy, and far more nobly born than the English *parvenu*, to poverty and exile.

Sir Frederick Mottram had been guided, in many of his views of foreign policy, by the opinions of men who held a dinner at the Russian embassy of greater importance than the liberties of mankind. He had therefore driven the Polish, like the Italian cause, from his mind; as the selfish throw off a subject which touches their sympathy at the expense of their interests and their pleasures. He had been the boon companion to the husband of the ambassadress of Russia; he had known many Russian nobles, had borrowed many Russian opinions, and deemed the conduct of the Poles, to say the best of it, indiscreet and romantic. Although he would not have refused to assist at a *soirée* because the illustrious Prince Czartoriski honoured it with his presence, he had yet declined his friend Horace Harvey's invitation to be introduced to him. Now, however, that he was thus brought accidentally in contact with another distinguished representative of Polish patriotism, gallantry, and intellectual refinement, he was fascinated, bewitched.

There was nothing in the conversation of the stranger to shock

his self-love, by argumentatively demonstrating how shallow was his knowledge, how deep his ignorance, of the wrongs of Poland ; but there were little details which wrung his heart, and traits that awoke all his indignation. The melancholy energy, the feeling eloquence of the sad narrative, went home to his bosom, in spite of his prejudices, and awakened the latent charities of his nature, which the selfish habits, and the routine, unreflecting opinions of an arrogant, over-weening, and anti-national faction had failed to annihilate.

In alluding to the cause of his visit to Ghent, Colonel *** was led to speak of its object, who had experienced more than his portion of the national misery, and contributed more than his share towards her yet unattained redemption. His dying mother had given up her last sigh, when the agents of the imperial tyrant were searching her deathbed for proofs of what was impiously deemed her guilt—a mother's interest in a banished son. His female relations had been whipped in the streets of Warsaw, for not abandoning their brothers, or betraying their husbands ; and when the cause had become desperate, still hoping in spite of hope, he had returned to Poland with a small but trusty band of associates ; he had maintained himself against the pursuit of overwhelming numbers, skulking for weeks in swamps, all but famished in inhospitable forests, suffering the pangs of hunger and of thirst, and the burning agony of undressed wounds. He had taught the dull, laboured for the sordid, thrown away his brilliant accomplishments on the unawakened and the vulgar. He had done all, suffered all, that humanity could perform or endure, for the sake of right, liberty, and national independence.

“ Still, you must not pity us too much,” said Colonel ***, on some exclamation of compassion uttered by Sir Frederick at the sufferings of the family of the young, the gallant B——ski ; “ nor mistake our misfortunes for our merits. We want, among ourselves, that unity which alone deserves the triumph of national redemption. Ségur, in his account of *la grande armée*, when he gives us so honourable a place, says, ‘ *les Polonais promettent plus qu’ils ne peuvent tenir ; et ils tiennent plus qu’ils ne promettent.*’ This gives the measure of our conduct. Our sensibility leads us too far in the first instance, and our restless energies go beyond the dreams even of our own imagination.”

“ It is easy, ” said Sir Frederick, “ to preach prudence to na-

tions in adversity, as to individuals; but——” He paused, surprised to find himself defending the indiscretions of the Poles, to whose virtues he had been hitherto as insensible as incredulous.

The Colonel's horses now appeared from the gate of the hotel, and the strange associates parted under those favourable impressions which mutual admiration is so calculated to awaken. They exchanged cards; and the English tory promised to seek the Polish liberal, on his arrival at Brussels. He was still something surprised, by the intimation on the visiting card, to find that the Polish magnate was in the personal service of the King of the Belgians. It was a new light thrown on the state of the times, an evidence of the hopeless impracticability of the system of conservatism, in the face of a spirit of change and of innovation so universal and so penetrating. The little incident was a practical lesson, tending more to shake the stronghold of prejudice, than all Bentham had ever preached, or radicalism asserted. Man is rarely taught through argument; and one personal conviction is worth a ‘bushel of reasons.’

CHAPTER XIII.

GHENT.

THERE is no capital in Europe where the stranger finds himself more a stranger than in London. The works of art and the monuments of antiquity are there only accessible at an expense of money and of labour far greater than the admission is worth. The egotism also of the people, and their contempt (real or affected) for foreigners, close every avenue to courtesy against the approach of the continental traveller, who comes not labelled by high titles, or that most powerful of all letters of recommendation—wealth. At every step, the mere unpretending scholar and gentleman, incapable of contending in expenditure with his equals among the natives, but approaching the greatest country of the world with enthusiasm and

benevolence, is repelled by mortification and disappointment. On the Continent, the very reverse of this churlish exclusiveness is exhibited; for national vanity does the honours, even when higher motives are wanting.

Unknown, unannounced, Sir Frederick Mottram had hitherto found Belgian politeness the best cicerone to Belgian sight-seeing; and the accidents which had procured him so much unpurchased information and amusement, were well worth the paid services of hireling ignorance, upon which the English traveller so generally throws himself.

Sir Frederick was still at breakfast, at the Hôtel de la Poste, and poring over a paragraph copied from the English papers into Galignani, of which his own departure for the Continent was the theme, when his new friend the *Employé* made his appearance. No time was to be lost; nor did the Englishman's taste for the arts permit him to lose any. The transition from the idle gossip of the newspaper to the noblest monuments of past ages was refreshing and energizing; and he threw down with alacrity the narrative of Lady Frances Mottram's *déjeûné* at the Willows, to visit the time-worn tower in which Charles the Fifth was born,—the noble Cathedral of St. Bevon,—the Palace of the University,—the Gallery of Monsieur Scamp, and other objects of curiosity marked down by his new guide and courteous acquaintance.

Ghent is one of the most ancient, perhaps, of the Belgian cities, as it is the site of some of the most notable incidents of Belgian history. Its existence is recorded as far back as the seventh century, the epoch when King Dagobert sent St. Amand to preach the gospel there. In the commencement of the ninth century, Charlemagne made it a temporary residence; and towards its close, Baldwin *Bras-de-Fer*, the first Count of Flanders, fortified the town, and erected the stronghold called the *Graven Kasteel*.

In the tenth century, Ghent was already celebrated for its looms and its dyers; and the Gantois cultivated with success the surrounding country, which they had reclaimed. In 1297, the city was sufficiently powerful to repel an English army of twenty-four thousand men, headed by the gallant Edward the First; and in 1581, it possessed within its walls eighty thousand fighting men. In all ages of its history, it was famous for its struggles for independence.

The whole of the fourteenth century was passed in contests with its feudal chiefs ; but amidst the tumults of war and sedition, its manufactures and commerce continued to thrive and multiply.

Ghent is now but the melancholy monument of its past glories, the tomb of its own energies and prosperity. Its antique and noble belfry, raised in 1183, is perhaps one of the most remarkable remains of the middle ages. It was from the contemplation of its brazen dragon (carried off from Bruges in the time of the Crusades) that Sir Frederick, accompanied by his friend, proceeded to the *Tour des Princes*, the ancient tower where the mad Queen of Castile gave birth to the future Emperor, the master of the destinies of Europe.

In a small dreary apartment, where the wheels of industry now turn merrily round, once stood the magnificent cradle of Charles, surrounded by the offerings of tributary princes. The young Gantois proudly alluded to the fact. “Here,” he observed, “Charles de Croi, Prince de Chimai, presented a golden casque, ornamented with a phœnix. Here the Marquis de Berg, then a powerful feudatory, offered a golden sword ; and Marguerite d’Autriche, the aunt of the imperial infant, presented a basin of pure gold, enriched with precious stones.”

“*Eh ! ben, oui,*” said a female spinner, bending her coifed head over the work her nimble fingers were executing. “What are your Princes de Chimai, and your Marquises de Berg, now ? *Notre filature de coton, voyez-vous, vaut bien tout cela—n’est-ce pas, Monsieur ?*” And she addressed the question to Sir Frederick.

He started at the personality of the singular demand, which, simple as it was, bore at once upon the feudal past and the utilitarian present.

“I should not wonder,” said Monsieur D—, “if this brusque spinner was one of the patriotic heroines of the Four Days. The names of the Belgian nobles, (the Chimais, the De Lignes, and the D’Arembergs,) are in no very good odour with the lower classes of Ghent, who by no means make common cause with their Orangist masters. *Comment t’appelles-tu, ma bonne amie ?*” he asked of the spinner, observing that the Englishman had been struck by her observation.

“*Je m’appelle Marguerite d’Artevelde,*” she replied.

“Two great names!” replied the interrogator. “Are you a

descendant of the great Philip and Jacques d'Artevelde, the dictators of Flanders?"

"What does that signify?" she asked petulantly. "Who can answer such a question? My mother was called Marguerite, and I am called *La Dule Greite*.* We should not go beyond the mothers; one is always sure that far—*tenez!*"

The women of the factory laughed.

"At all events," said Monsieur D——, "the name is a good name." And turning to Sir Frederick, he added, "Marguerite de Gand, commonly called Marguerite of Austria, the aunt of Charles the Fifth, was a great woman. The wisdom and patriotism of her conduct, as *gouvernante des Pays-Bas* for her nephew, has left an indelible impression. If Marie-Thérèse is the idol of the noblesse, '*Margot, la gente Demoiselle*,' is that of the people; and she possesses a traditional interest with them which renders her name popular;—it is, in fact, a *nom de bon augure*."

"Not always," muttered Sir Frederick, with a sigh; and after a momentary abstraction he started, as one recovering from a painful reverie. "Where are we to proceed now?" he asked carelessly.

"We will, if you please, take the most magnificent of our modern edifices, the Palace of the University, in our way to the most ancient, the Cathedral of St. Bevon."

Sir Frederick offered some money to one of the women of the manufactory, who conducted them to the gate; and his companion inquired of her who was *la vieille Flamande*, that plied her wheel and her tongue with such dexterity.

"*Comment!*" said the woman. "Do you not know Sœur Greite, of the *grand Béguinage*? *Dame!* not so old, neither; but huddled up in her habit *comme un fagot*. She does a deal of charity, and often visits the factory, and takes a turn at the spinning among us. She won't let our young ones work beyond their strength, and sees to the ventilation of the apartments—which is not so good for the work; but they let her have her way."

It struck Sir Frederick, that this same Sœur Greite resembled exceedingly, in her clumsy figure and guttural accent, the *Béguine*

* '*The wild Marguerite*,' the name given to an old piece of artillery, at Ghent.

of the hospital of St. Jean. If she were the same person, she had probably made one of a group of women, apparently of the lower class, who had occupied the fore part of the *treckschuyt*, on the preceding day. The subject was still in his head, when they arrived at the Palace of the University. But its cold imitation of the severe Greek architecture, and its emblematic statues of Orange Wisdom and Nassau Justice, were all too little connected with the genius of the place, with the Charlemagnes and the Dagoberts,* the *Bras-de-Fer* and the *Téméraires*, to give it an interest in the mind of the spectator. To Sir Frederick's remark to this effect, the young cicerone replied, laughing :

“ It has at least one merit,—it is built on the ruins of a Jesuit church.”

The cathedral, dedicated to St. Bevon, a noble specimen of the severest and best school of Gothic architecture, afforded a far finer object of contemplation. Its lofty elevation, simple distribution and chastity of ornaments, are all characteristic of the age in which it was raised. The effect, on entrance, is that of physical vastness united with moral grandeur. It is a monument of the perfection to which the arts were brought in a country of free manufacturers, who, like the republican merchants of Italy, proved themselves the best protectors of genius, and produced *among* themselves, and *of* themselves, some of the greatest artists the world had ever seen.

In passing up the lofty and magnificent nave, which stands in such perfect harmony with the lateral aisles, where every chapel is a cabinet, Sir Frederick paused over each separate object with an interest derived from his recent reading. The carved pulpit of Laurent del Vaux, the marble mausoleum of a bishop of Ghent, the chiselled stalls of the canons of the church, and the tall massy gilt bronze candelabra, (which had lighted the court-masks of Charles the First, and were sold to the canons of St. Bevon, by one, to whom power was far more dear than its symbols, Oliver Cromwell,) alternately engaged and riveted all his attention. The famous altar-piece by Rubens—where he has painted himself as St. Hubert, as a mendicant at the gates of the convent, and followed by holy women, who personate

* In 636, Dagobert founded the first Christian church in Ghent, through the mission of St. Amand.

his fat and florid wives—was, as Sir Frederick observed, “a picture to bend the knee before.” But his devotions were held in reserve for the more precious work of the two Van Eykes, which the sacristan approached with religious respect, disposing the lights of the chapel so as to exhibit it to the spectator with the happiest effect.

As a monument of the state of art at the early period when the process of painting in oil was first discovered, this picture derives its greatest value. But though deficient in perspective, and exhibiting the flowers on the remotest plants elaborate and distinct as those of the foreground, its heads are of exquisite beauty and expression. God the Father, in a bishop’s mitre, is seated on his throne, and holds a crystal sceptre in his left hand. On his right and left are the Virgin and St. John, each engaged in reading. The Lamb, standing on an altar, and surrounded by saints, angels, and other personages, amounting to three hundred figures, is represented pouring forth blood from its heart. Nothing can exceed the beauty and variety of these figures; and they show, that in the rudest and simplest epochs of art, as in its most florid development, genius can make itself evident, and strike out, amidst general mediocrity, its own certain and unfailing path to immortality.

“The exposition of this picture,” said the sacristan in a tone of nasal psalmody, “which took place in 1451, in this chapel of the family of De Vyts, was a great festival for the ancient city of Ghent. Its painter was Hubert Van Eyke, the greatest that ever existed; and it was finished in 1452, by his brother John, the second of his art. It originally consisted of twelve pannels. It was commanded by Josse De Vyts, and his wife Isabella, the daughter of the first magistrate of Ghent in that time. During the religious troubles of 1566, a band of deists and philosophers attacked our churches, broke the statues and pictures, and destroyed the golden shrines and silver reliquaries. But Notre Dame de Gand watched over the immortal works of the Van Eykes. They were replaced in 1585. Three of the pannels were taken to Paris in the French revolution, but were restored in 1815. Two years afterwards, the Canons sold four of them to Monsieur Van Nieuwenhuyse of Brussels, who sold them to Mr. Solly of London, who sold them to the King of Prussia. Six of them are in the *Palais d’Orange* at Brussels; but nobody knows for certain what has become of the

two others, though I have heard that they were sold to”

He paused to recollect the name.

“To whom?” asked Sir Frederick. “If they are still in the market, I would purchase them at any price.”

“Ah! I remember now,” said the sacristan. “They were sold to the Princess of Schaffenhhausen.”

Sir Frederick paid the sacristan for his trouble; and the obliging *Employé*, obliged to attend in another quarter of the city, conducted his *protégé* to the collection of Monsieur Scamp, where he took his leave with an ‘*au revoir, à tantôt,*’ but without even asking the name of the stranger he had so much obliged.

The traveller whose knowledge of the treasures of art still existing in Belgium leads him to the threshold of the Scamp Gallery, one of the richest private collections in the Low Countries, has only to knock at the old-fashioned hall-door, (which, as well as the hall into which it opens, recalls the English mansions of Queen Anne’s day,) and to make known his desire. A broad, good-humoured Flemish face smiles a welcome; and the domestic cicerone of the liberal connoisseur conducts the stranger to a suite of rooms on the ground-floor, presents him with a catalogue, bows, and retires. The spectator, thus left to the full enjoyment of his own observations, is neither bound to the cant of criticism, nor taxed to flatter, at the expense of candour, the master of the collection or his representative.

Sir Frederick Mottram, thus turned loose into a pasture on which his long-repressed tastes were eager to banquet, paused with delight, to take breath, before the rich feast which presented itself. He found, with infinite pleasure, that in this temple, peopled with mimic forms, he alone lived and moved; and that all around him was silence and solitude. What forms, what countenances, what genius, beauty, power, energies, thought, glanced on him from every side! what expressions of passion, of intellect, the impress of mind upon muscle and fibre!

The history of the Low Countries lay before him, her tyrants and her patriots, her dukes and her demagogues, her statesmen and diplomatists, her magnificent women, and her splendid artists. In the first flush of his pleasure, he could not fix himself to any one specimen. The two great Vandykes at the very entrance of the

gallery, the full-length figures of P. Gonsalvo di Cordova, ambassador from Spain to the republic of Venice, and of Alexandro Scaglia, the Spanish representative at the congress of Munster, seemed to start from their frames and canvass to detain him. The expression of the noble countenance of Gonsalvo was thoughtful and acute ; and the beautiful aristocratic hands, finished even to the nails, might have been the despair of Lord Byron or of Napoleon.* A fine sketch on paper lay on a seat before the latter ; he looked at it for a moment, and then walked through the suite of apartments.

These apartments opened to the right into what are called *chambrettes* (small recesses terminated by a window), which were hung with the most precious of the cabinet pictures. There was one which for a moment arrested him in his pleasurable pursuit. The light of its window fell upon a female figure seated on a low crimson velvet cushion. Implements of art were strewn around her, and she was drawing upon a large portfolio spread upon her knees : its massive clasp caught a spark of silver light, and reflected it back upon as much of a broad, clear forehead, as the position of the head, and the fall of two jetblack tresses on either brow, left visible. The bend of her long columned neck was in itself a study for a painter. The rounding of her statue-like shoulders was defined by a Vandyke of white cambric, like those observable in almost all the Flemish portraits ; and a voluminous dress, with loose long sleeves of black stuff, flung back from the elbow, completed a picture, which the deep shade of the recess, and the light from its high window, rendered perfect.

There was a moment of perfect illusion, which a breath might have dissipated. Sir Frederick Mottram did not breathe, but the artist did ; and there was a heaving of the bosom-drapery, which transferred the admiration of the beholder from what appeared at first a living picture, to the most picturesque of living forms. The fall of the catalogue from Sir Frederick's hands, noiseless as it was, sufficed to call off the artist's attention from her study. She turned round her head ; and her face, half concealed by her dark hair, transfixed the gaze of the spectator. Thought never ennobled, nor

* This picture was painted at Genoa, where it remained till Lebrun brought it to Paris in 1807.

passion energized, a finer countenance. The mobility of its expression left no power to dwell upon the features ; and except the peculiar character of her eyes and mouth, nothing definite remained in his mind.

The whole, however, was a spell. It operated as a spell on the nerves and imagination of one both nervous and imaginative. His surprise and admiration were mixed with some confused remembrance, whose source he could not detect, that this face must, he thought, have been known to him before. Had he seen it in a dream, or in a picture ? and was the splendid original now before him a professional model for artists ? The first purple bloom of youth indeed had passed away from the countenance ; but it had left behind a clear glow of animated health, and a rounded fulness of form replacing the delicate symmetry of more juvenile outlines.

The lady had again dropped her head over her work, scarcely returning the bow, or acknowledging the apology of the intruder. He withdrew, therefore, and turned his attention to the exhaustless riches of the Rubenses, the Rembrandts, the Gerard Dows, and the Hobbimas. Beautiful as were these immortal works, they did not fix his thoughts ; which were still in the *chambrette*, devoted to the living original of that great master of all masters—Nature. He was almost induced to think that the lady must be the person whose acquaintance he had made in the Grande Place of Bruges ; an acquaintance favoured by the flattery of his self-love, in her drawing on board the *treckschuyt*—for vanity will vanquish shyness, when reason fails.

While yet hesitating, a movement, a light footfall, a figure issuing from the *chambrette* in a mantle and hood, determined him in the affirmative. He advanced, and expressed the hope that he was not mistaken in his supposition. Her answer was brief, careless, and acknowledging the identity. It was made while she was replacing in her portfolio the sketch which lay on the seat opposite Vandyke's magnificent pictures. Sir Frederick begged to see it, offered a criticism, and threw out a hint that he would deem no sum exorbitant which would obtain him a copy of that unrivalled original. The lady's sketch was taken from the portrait of Scaglia ; and the *finesse* of that speaking countenance was admirably preserved.

“ A copy of this picture,” she observed, “worthy of the original,

ought to bring a great price. Vandyke is the master painter of the North, the Raphael of the Flemish school. If Rubens has had more than his meed of immortality, Vandyke has had less. The correct drawing and brilliant colouring of the former can be fully appreciated by the pedant critic and the vulgar multitude; but the mysterious divinity of expression caught and communicated by the far superior genius of Vandyke, escapes the dull, and beams not for the merely learned. There was that within the master's mind which met the intellectual supremacy of superior natures half-way, catching and giving inspiration to the object it embodied. In those two heads—nay, in the very fingers of that speaking hand, there is an indication of thought and an illustration of character."

"A curious observation," said Sir Frederick. "The hand is exquisite!"

"Yes; but I should not like to come in contact with the man to whom it belonged," she answered smilingly. "Those long fingers are to be distrusted. They denote an aptitude to legerdemain, both moral and physical, and go with a certain serpentine character. I have seen such men turn, and twist, and coil like a snake, in all their movements, moral and physical. As politicians, they are uncertain, and have as much cunning, at least, as wisdom in their conduct and composition. They are subtile, if not sinister; and have, or imagine they have, much to conceal. One should beware of those over-long, flexible joints, always in motion."

"I really do believe," said Sir Frederick, much amused, "that the firm of purpose and the frank of heart have them not."

"Never," said the artist. "The idea of Satan's taking a snake's form is physiologically correct and poetically fine."

"There is a fearful philosophy in that observation," said Sir Frederick: "one is almost awe-stricken, in coming in contact with a mind which holds the secret of reading characters even from the fingers' ends."

"We artists," she replied, "must draw our inferences concerning qualities from external structure; and the habit of examining the formal and visible expressions of mind, gives us great facility in the practice; when we are not absolutely fools: which, however, we often are."

"You had a female painter among you, called 'the Sorceress,' "

he observed, endeavouring to catch a view of the lady's face from beneath her hood.

“ Amongst us? — yes : but not of our school, in any sense ; Madame Rozée of Leyden. She was Dutch ; and the term ‘ Sorce-ress’ is applicable to the execution, and not to the conception, of her works. You must learn, sir, to distinguish between the Flemish and Dutch schools : they are too often confounded, though distinctly different.”

“ I begin to perceive that they are. The heads of your early masters, the Van Eykes and the Hemlinks, give the clue to the intellectuality of the Flemish school.”

“ To which Vandyke set the seal. Look,” she added, “ at this ‘ Magdalen,’ by Gerard Dow. You see *his* idea of the woman, whose ‘ sins were forgiven her for her loving much,’ was that of a fat *vrouw*, as much in anger as in sorrow. This was the type, which existed in his mind, of the struggle between passion and grace. But look at the sensible objects ; look at the light of that lamp, by which she does not weep, but blubber ! You must shade your eyes, the glare is so painful ; and every object in the scene reflects it. This is the great beauty of the Dutch school.”

“ Yes, life in all its coarse forms represented to the life ; nature, ill chosen, but never outraged. And yet,” he added, fixing his eyes on her face, “ these painters had splendid models. I have observed here a Spanish—I had almost said a Moorish, beauty, from the dark intensity of expression ; heads such as inspired Murillo !”

“ You are reverting to the Flemish school and its models,” said the lady, interrupting him : “ we were discussing the Dutch school. Take Paul Potter, for instance. The Venus de Medicis of Paul Potter was a beautiful cow ; as the Apollo of Rembrandt was his own grotesque person in gorgeous drapery. Look,” and she led the way to the *chambrette* where she had been drawing, “ what a miracle of art ! This is perhaps the finest portrait of Rembrandt in the world. It is known by the name of ‘ *Le Petit Turc*,’ from the gemmed turban and robe. It is painted in two colours only, and has none of the ‘ *manière strapassière*’ which is the *cachet* of his style.”

“ Yes, I see. What an illusion ! But genius has so many resources ! How you people of genius must laugh at the world !”

“ And how, in return, the world makes genius weep !” she

replied. "How many of the highly-organized creatures whose works now surround us have lived only to suffer : some died of want, and all submitted to the humiliating indignity of being patronised."

"Yes; and patronised, too, by the dulness that understood them not, or by the malignity which converts patronage into an instrument of torture. Yet there are minds to whom the patronage and protection of genius would afford the highest, the purest source of pride and felicity; the only one, perhaps, they can know."

"I have no great confidence in such protection," was the stern reply. "It is but another name for dependence; and who that are conscious of genius, who that feel the god within them, would submit to *that*? No, sir; the gifted must pay their penalty. To be superior to our species, is a moral unfitness. It places its victim out of the ban of ordinary society; *above* it, perhaps, but still *out* of it. This is the alien-act of Nature. Time-serving and ductile mediocrity will always have the best of it. Whoever ventures to enlighten the world by the discovery of truth, is the doomed martyr of contemporary ignorance; while the talents that delight it, realize the old fable of the 'Nightingale and the Thorn.'"

Her voice fell to a melancholy cadence. The animation that had given the brilliant mobility of youth to her features had fled; and an expression deeply meditative, as of one who held sad communion with the past, contracted her dark brows into a care-worn and desponding look. There was a momentary silence, from which she was the first to break.

"But you, sir," she said, "you have always been prosperous and rich. It is for your smiles that artists work and live. You are, doubtless, one of the rich English *milords*."

Then, turning abruptly away, and resuming her usual tone, she pointed to a picture painted by Gabriel Metz, and dated 1652.

"This gem," she said, "is called '*La Leçon de Musique*.'"

"I know of no peril," said Sir Frederick, "greater than that to which a man is exposed either in giving or taking lessons in the arts or philosophy from a beautiful woman : her voice sinks to the heart, while the sentiments it expresses rouse all the higher sympathies of our nature."

"You speak with feeling, monsieur."

“With experience,” he replied emphatically, and still gazing on her grave but beautiful face.

“This woman’s head,” she continued, “is very ideal for a Flemish beauty. You see here the ideality communicated to the Flemish school by Vandyke, and copied by Murillo. Compare this head with the florid, fleshy solidity of Rubens’s conjugal seraglio.”

“But all that is called ideality,” replied Sir Frederick, “must be based in fact, and have an existence in nature. I have a type of that very head in my own recollection, as if I had seen some living Murillo.”

“Such types, however, are rare : one seldom sees such a brow as that, or such a bend of the neck ; a grace not beyond the reach of art, but its perfection.”

“I have seen very recently just such a brow and such a bend.”

“Oh!” she said carelessly, “between pictures and individuals there will occasionally be found an accidental likeness. But, alas! the grace, the beauty, the bright types of long-passed visions, leave nothing behind them but this canvass mimicry. Nature, exhausting as rapidly as she creates, soon brings the brightest original to this!” — She pointed to the head of an old woman, by Denner, painted with all that minute attention to decaying nature in which that Dutch master excels.

“The Dutch school,” she continued, “is in this respect divine—that it is the temple of old women, where their furrows are adored, and every dell has the charm of a dimple for admiring posterity. What a cheerful resignation to wrinkles is here! This is not general, but particular nature. A Dutch temperament easily reconciles itself to a change, which is only felt deeply by that sensibility which has known how divine a thing it is to please, how bitter a pang to have ceased to do so.”

“But there are beings,” said Sir Frederick, warmly, “on whom the usual inflictions of time fall so lightly as not to be felt; who, bewitching in their youth, are still fascinating in . . .”

“Their prime,” she interrupted, laughing : “that prime! more evanescent than youth itself!—But the whole is a phantasm!”

She paused, and sighed. Then pointing to a picture by Rubens, she added :—

“See here! Look at this child! Here is the rich, round mus-

cle, that tells of unworn sensations. You see it is Rubens's own daughter; for it resembles his first wife, Isabella Brant. It is the *beau idéal* of Flemish children, and one of the finest portraits in the collection."

"How highly finished!" said Sir Frederick. "The figure is not starting from the picture, but actually standing out from it."

"Yes; the child is walking forth from the portico of its father's garden, which you will doubtless see, monsieur, at Antwerp; the all that remains of the gorgeous house of the '*Prince-Painter*.' It is much better worth seeing than the ruins of the citadel."

"Oh, yes," said Sir Frederick, "is is: but I have already seen Antwerp, some years back; it is the Bologna of Belgium. I lingered some days in its rich gallery in 1829."

"Monsieur is now on his route to the German spas, perhaps?" asked the lady, rather inquisitively.

"I have scarcely any plan for the future," he replied. "I live but for the moment. The present is to me 'all in all,' and, too happy to secure a delicious sensation from objects perhaps but too fleeting, I have given the past to the winds, and leave the future to the chances: they have hitherto highly favoured my rather eccentric course thus far in Belgium."—He bowed.

"The arts are pregnant with such delicious sensations!" said the artist; "music above all others. But pray fix your attention on this charming portrait of Rubens's daughter. It represents the characteristic sumptuousness of the ostentatious painter, who stood at the head of our numerous masters. Only see the magnificent costume of this child; her rich petticoat, striped with gold! her point-lace apron! her blue velvet mantle, and lilac velvet gown and hat!—and such a feather in that hat! fluttered by the wind! A silver chain too, and a diamond cross: and all this magnificence of dress contrasted with the rather vulgar look, and laughing, noisy, romping air of the spoiled young heiress, who seems to run, chirping and chuckling, towards you!"

"You give it a life by your criticism, that enhances the miracle of its execution," said Sir Frederick.

"If I gave out what I feel, it would be a great power; but enthusiasm in the arts never does. This was the child for whom the Archduke Albert stood godfather; for the Seigneur de Steens was a

grand seigneur, as well as a great painter and a distinguished statesman. ”

“ What a splendid life was his ! ” said Sir Frederick ; “ the triumph of genius and of ambition : the first painter of his age ; the secretary of state to the powerful and charming Archduchess Isabelle ; the minister from the astute Philip the Fourth of Spain to the picture-loving Charles of England ; the friend of the wily and wicked Buckingham ; the favourite *causeur* of Marie de Medicis ; maintaining the independence of an artist, and displaying the spirit of a prince ! ”

“ The spirit of a prince ! ” she replied : “ you English love to talk of the spirit of a prince ; but, as applied to high-minded genius, ’ ’tis a poor comparison ! How did Rubens treat the prince who sent him fifty pistoles ? How did he answer your English alchymist who came to tempt him with the philosopher’s stone ? Pointing to the pictures in his study, he said, ‘ You are come too late ; I have found the philosopher’s stone without other science than lies in my palettes and brushes. ’ Our Flemish masters were great creatures. They may march abreast with the Titians and the Raphaels, but they are less known, because European education is yet too circumscribed to open to the public the true history of the middle ages, north of the Tiber. The story of Vandyke is a romance. ”

“ And where may it be found ? ” asked Sir Frederick, eagerly. The lady paused for a moment.

“ Do you proceed to Brussels, monsieur ? ”

“ I believe this evening ; at least, I *had* intended to do so. ”

“ And how long do you remain there ? ”

“ That must depend on circumstances ; on those whom I may meet there. I have hitherto travelled under a lucky star ! ”

“ You wish to have a copy of Vandyke, ” said the lady, evasively : “ would you not prefer an original ? ”

Sir Frederick smiled, and hesitated with the coolness of a connoisseur.

“ Why, yes, ” he said ; “ but there may be circumstances to render a copy infinitely precious. ”

The artist took a card from her portfolio, and wrote with a pencil on the back :—“ *Monsieur Janssens, fabricant de den-*

telle, la Puterie, No. 3, à Bruxelles. Présenté par Mad. Marguerite. ”

“ This card, ” she said, “ will give you admittance to the collection of a worthy tradesman, descended by the female line from Vandyke. You will see there a fine picture of the great master which is for sale ; and you will hear from the Janssens family more of Vandyke traditionally, than books have yet given. To know the Flemish masters, you must study them both pictorially, and morally on their own soil, among their posterity. ”

“ And where are we to find, ” he replied, as he read the card, “ the Flemish mistresses? ”

“ Which of our female artists? ” she asked with *naïveté*. “ We have produced many eminent women in the arts. To begin with *Marguerite Van Eyke*, the sister of Hubert and John. She cultivated her art with such devotion, that she made a vow to St. Beghé, the patroness of the *Béguines*, never to marry. By the bye, you should see the *Béguinage* here ; it is one of the great features of Ghent. ”

“ I intend to do so this evening :—But did Margaret keep her vow? ” asked Sir Frederick, endeavouring to fix the evasion of the adroit artist.

“ Oh ! most religiously, though she had many offers of marriage. There are women, with whom a great cause supersedes all personal, all human weaknesses. ”

“ Weaknesses ! ” reiterated Sir Frederick. “ Do you call the all we know or guess of happiness on earth, a weakness? ”

“ Are not all first predilections *that*? ” she asked, sharply. “ Do not women—nay, men, too, frequently mistake the vividness of their own young sensations for the perfection of the object that awakens them? and though they should not discover their mistake, do they not act as if they had? There are few men who do not blush for their first loves ; and fewer still, who have not cast them off heartlessly—recklessly. ”

Sir Frederick was astounded at the observation, but more at the manner in which it was uttered. He had been struck by many observations of the singular and original speaker, as having more than an accidental relation to his own personal circumstances. The suspicion that he was not wholly unknown to her, that he

had met her somewhere before, came with irresistible force upon his mind. There was a peculiar seduction in the tone of her voice; a voice to which something within him answered responsively; a voice which, uniting with the snatches he had caught of her features, almost induced him to believe that the Belgian artist was the devout and charitable attendant at the death-bed of one, whom it was almost madness to remember.

What a tide of inferences flowed from that supposition! For a moment, they confused, overpowered him; and they were followed by a rush, a revulsion of sensations, rarely experienced after the sunny freshness of youth; but which, once experienced, is worth all that remains of life, though that life were prolonged for a century.

Under the impression of these feelings, which passed with the rapidity of lightning, leading him from doubt to certainty, and again back to utter incredulity, he had silently and nervously followed Madame Marguerite to another part of the room, where hung a very singular and curious interior, painted by Peter Neess. She had begun its description, when Sir Frederick, seizing the white small hand that pointed to it, said, with abrupt vehemence—

“I cannot suffer you to proceed, Madame Marguerite, till you answer me one fearful question, with which some of the deepest interests of my life are interwoven. Sit down for a moment. Your artist eloquence has lost its spell; and an incident—a hope—a fear—a doubt—a fancy, with which the arts have no connexion, (nay, I will be heard!) preoccupies my mind, to the exclusion of every other!”

She struggled to release her hand, which Sir Frederick held so firmly, while with her other she drew her hood across her face. Her emotion was evident, whether caused by surprise or by apprehension. But at that moment a group of visitors entered the room, and her interlocutor found himself surrounded by Mr. Montague St. Leger, Lord Montessor, Lord Alfred, Mr. Tyler, his son and daughter, and not a few strangers, of all nations.

The recognition of the Montessor party was announced by a laugh, and by various exclamations, which were not to be mistaken; while the Tyler family addressed their acquaintance of the *treck-schuyt* with a cordial and familiar recognition, and an attempt at shaking hands that amounted to a seizure.

Almost stunned by the ridiculous embarrassment of his situation, Sir Frederick had dropped (as though it were a scorpion) the beautiful hand which he had clasped with such energy a moment before; but he had neither temper nor presence of mind to meet the raillery or rebut the suspicion with which he saw every eye and tongue prepared to assail him.

“*La colombe retrouvée!*” shouted Lord Montessor.

“*Et très mal-à-propos,*” said Lord Alfred, looking after the hooded figure, as she glided into the motley crowd now filling the room (the overflowing of the *treckschuyt*, and of those English posters by the sea and land who make Ghent their first halt to and from Brussels).

“I say, Mottram,” continued Lord Alfred, with a bantering look and a deliberate folding of his arms; “is it true that you have abandoned politics for the *arts*, as the ‘Age’ has it? and have we disturbed your studies here from *the life*?”

“We are really not accountable for the intrusion,” said Mr. St. Leger; “we should have passed on to Brussels without a surmise of your being here, only that very obliging person, your Irish *valet-de-chambre*, recognised Lord Montessor, and gave us some lights concerning your present pursuits.”

Sir Frederick only answered by a forced smile, and a few cold words and inquiries, pleading indisposition for his detention in Belgium.

“Well, my eyes!” said Mr. Tyler, advancing familiarly; “how you must be surprised, fellow-traveller, to see us, too, no further than *Gong*. A pretty business we have made on it! Lost our places in the Hinglish diligence as plies between this old barrack of a town and Brussels; and our umbrellas too—all owing to that whelp there eating too much of the Hostend gingerbread, and getting a touch of the blue cholera! Never so frightened in all my life! Not a potticur in the whole place as can speak Hinglish; and we couldn’t muster as much French among us as would ask for Glauber’s salts; after all it cost me, too, for my darter’s hedication at a French boarding-school.”

“La! pa, how can you talk so!” said Miss Tyler, pulling back her father, and saluting Sir Frederick. “I suppose, Sir Frederick, you have stopped to see the picturs; they are so very fine! an’t they?”

Your own gentleman, Mr. Fegan, told us that you are such a lover of the harts; and were all the morning looking at the halter-pieces and fine things in these old-fashioned churches. I'm sure, had we known you were going, we should have been so 'appy to have joined you."

"To be sure," said the father; "and then we might have clubbed to pay them popish fellows in the sashes and halberts as shows the tombs. It's a great himposition: though, for that, I must say they're nothing [to Westminster Habbey, or St. Paul's.]"

"Are these your *compagnons de voyage*," asked Lord Alfred, directing his laughing eyes alternately to the several members of the Tyler family.

"What a splendid collection! said Lord Montessor, looking round with an equivocal glance. Come, Mottram, do the honours; you seem quite at home here.—By Jove! Alfred, look at that Charles the First, star, ribbon, and all, by Lely."

"I doubt that much," said Lord Alfred: "how the devil should a Lely get here?"

"How very like the late Marquis of Abercorn!" said Mr. St. Leger.

"All the Stuart pictures are," said Lord Montessor.

"Is that the man that walked and talked half-an-hour after his head was cut off?" asked Master Tyler of his sister.

"Don't you see he has got his 'ead on his shoulders, you foolish boy?" said the father. "Well, we shall see what they'll do for you at Idleberg."

"Look, I beseech you," said Lord Montessor; "here is a Leonardo da Vinci: I'd swear to it! What a picture! Don't you agree with me, Mottram?"

"I am quite sure you are wrong," said Sir Frederick, peevishly, yet endeavouring to master his feelings. "There are not half-a-dozen Leonardos out of Italy. This is a Flemish picture."

"I'll bet fifty guineas it's a Leonardo," said Lord Montessor, in all the doggedness of ignorant pretension.

"It would be a bubble bet," said Sir Frederick. "The picture is marked in the catalogue here, 'by Mabuse, a Hungarian.' I know his manner; and have two of his pictures at Mottram Hall. Mabuse studied in Italy, and copied Leonardo with such success,

that in England (where he resided some time as court-painter) his pictures frequently passed for the works of that master. His finest pictures, however, are at Amsterdam. He was much noticed by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who was amused by his buffooneries."

"*Diavolo!*" exclaimed Lord Alfred; "Mottram has been studying the great masters to some purpose;—or rather, perhaps, the great mistresses."

"If here ar'n't boys flying kites, as like Bill and Tom Wilkins of our street as two peas!—look, father!" interrupted the victim of gingerbread, forcibly stricken by the truth of a beautiful Cuyp.

"Ay, surely," said Mr. Tyler, "it's well worth coming all the way to Gong, to see them there chaps, that are the nuisance of our street, stuck against a wall here,—or, at all events, the likes of sich brats."

"Have you a mind for a bet, sir, on this picture?" said Lord Montessor, turning towards Mr. Tyler, with whom he was infinitely amused, as a specimen of some unknown species of the social genus—something he had only seen in a play, or read of in a novel or a magazine.

Mr. Tyler drew back appalled, suspecting that he had fallen in with a party of blacklegs. Tucking a child under either arm, he replied:

"I, sir, bet! No, sir—not I. Never made a bet in my life; off the Exchange, at least. Besides, sir, I see nothing purticular in these here picturs. They're all black and dirty; nothing to compare to Somerset-house picturs, where they are spick and span new, and dressed like gentlemen and ladies of quality. I saw King George the Fourth there, in his coronation robes: it was worth a shilling to look at alone. But these here are only Monmouth-street picturs, and look like men in a play."

"Pray, Lord Alfred," said Miss Tyler, who had kept her large languishing eyes fixed on the first lord she had ever approached, "what is your opinion of Somerset-house this year?"

Lord Alfred drew up, horror-struck at the familiar address. The father was good fun; but the easy pertness of the daughter was 'rather too good.' He looked at her for a moment, and then turned on his heel.

“ Glad of it! ” said the father, chuckling, while Miss coloured and tossed her head : “ What business have you to make up to all the flashy fellows that fall in your way? I dare to say, though you take him for a lord, he’s no such thing; some chap from the west hend, one of Howell and James’s jackanapes. I’ve half a mind to ask him the price of cotton goods.”

“ Why, he *is* a lord, ” said the boy : “ I’ear’d’em call him at the inn; and sister read their names in a book there — Lord somebody. ”

“ Lord my eye!—no more a lord than I am; a poor, ill-fed looking creatur, as ever I seed,” muttered Mr. Tyler, secretly mortified at the contempt with which his daughter had been treated.

Lord Montessor was now in ecstasy before the superb coloured drawing of Rubens. He piqued himself on his own collection of designs by the great masters. “ If this, ” he said, “ were a get-at-able thing, I would bid handsomely for it. But who the devil does this collection belong to? we have been led here blindfold, by Mottram’s *Paddy*. ”

“ Don’t know at all,” said Mr. St. Leger. “ *Dites donc, ami, à qui appartient cette collection?* ”

The question was addressed to a young man, who, habited in a *blouse*, was recommending a Hobbima to Sir Frederick’s notice.

“ *C’est la collection de Monsieur Scamp,* ” he replied.

“ *Un de vos grands seigneurs?* ”

“ *Non, monsieur, un de nos bons bourgeois : Scamp est un nom très connu en Angleterre.* ”

“ A palpable hit,” said Lord Alfred, laughing.

“ The connoisseur looks like a peasant,” said Lord Montessor.

“ And is one, probably,” said Mr. St. Leger ; “ you are now in a land of equality, where you must expect to be elbowed at every turn. I should like to see a fellow with a waggoner’s frock in the Stafford gallery! ”

“ I wish I knew the subject of the drawing, though, ” continued Lord Montessor.

“ It is the miracle of St. Benoît,” said the *Blouse*, in good English, “ a sketch drawn and coloured by Rubens. It was made in

the Abbey of Afflinghem, near Alost, after Rubens had painted the famous picture of St. Roch, for the cathedral of that town. He promised the monks to return, and paint the subject in grand for their refectory, but he never did; and the place for it on the walls was kept vacant ever since till the suppression of all monasteries by the French."

Sir Frederick Mottram, meantime, had escaped. Arrived in the open air, he breathed freely, and walked rapidly he knew not whither, anxious only to avoid the *Kantur*, and the *Hôtel de la poste*, the place in Ghent 'where Britons most do congregate;' for he felt as little desirous to know where Lord Montessor and his party were going to, as he was to get involved in their movements. His rencontre with his English friends was unlucky: it took him in a moment least prepared to make head against the frivolous and vexatious impertinences of persons he despised, though he stood in check of their opinions. To get out of their way was now his object.

It struck him for a moment, that, as the two gentlemen were without their wives, they might be in pursuit of a wife for the third; and that the wealthy and odious Princess of Schaffenhhausen was the game in view. If so, they were probably on their way to her castle on the Rhine, for which Galignani had announced her departure from London. But another subject occupied his mind to the exclusion of every thought less interesting — his passing conviction that Madame Marguerite, the Belgian artist, was the mysterious guide of his wayward wanderings. Still the idea was *but* passing; and a thousand improbabilities rose to crush it in its infancy. He believed he had taken the wish for the fact. Her eloquence and her beauty had bewitched, excited him. He blushed for the liberty he had taken, for the emotion he had betrayed.

He *thought*, therefore, that he would *think* no more about the adventure, or its heroine; and he wandered on, thinking of nothing else, and least of all of the route he was taking. Thoroughly preoccupied, he continued his way through narrow streets, to which the lofty houses gave a sombre appearance, and their mossy pavements a desolate one. Stepped and architectural houses rose on either side, until the silent streets broke into straggling suburbs, which gradually opened into a noble avenue, shaded by long lines of lofty

trees. The scene became wholly changed. Tillage, gardens, and hop-grounds came thick upon the eye; and a gay and beautiful landscape succeeded to a gloomy and dilapidated town.

As Sir Frederick advanced, a cloud of dust involved all around him in its mists; and the next instant a *britzka*, drawn by five horses, passed on. Three gentlemen in the interior made signs to each other, and laughed; and then took off their hats. It was Lord Montessor and his party. Next came the *diligence anglaise*, appointed, as if to start from Charing-cross. It was full, inside and out. Miss Susan's straw bonnet and cherry ribbons flaunted through the open window. The Tylers, *père et fils*, were perched on the roof. They all saluted their "fellow-traveller;" and Sir Frederick thought, that, however it may have fared with the age of chivalry, the age of incognito was gone for ever!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BÉGUINAGE.

THE English travellers had passed on; the afternoon diligences had departed; the artificial life which is given to Ghent during the early part of the summer and autumnal days, by the '*entrées* and the *exits*' of English tourists (all treading the same track, directed and bear-led), had subsided. Sir Frederick Mottram, however, still remained at the *Hôtel de la Poste*, the last man in the world who might have been expected so to linger, where few of his country find food for curiosity, beyond what a morning's course can fully satisfy. What, then, was the spell that ruled him? A new interest had fallen, like a charm, over Belgium and its cause. Was it the romance of its ancient story, the splendour of its wondrous artists, the familiar names of its forests and fortresses, consecrated as they are by events connected with the heroism of Europe? Or was it some other influence that had touched on the long-latent spring of

excitement, and replaced the bitterness of irritated feelings by a series of light and pleasant emotions?

Returning to the *Hôtel de la Poste*, he had dropped into a bookseller's shop, to purchase a map of the Low Countries; and had picked up a little work, whose vignette had first attracted his eye, and whose pages engaged his attention. The title was, '*Précis Historique des Troubles de Bruxelles en 1718.*' The patriot hero of the tale was the venerable Anneessens, a citizen and a tradesman of Brussels, whose strange story and devoted constancy in the face of tyranny wanted only the high-sounding titles of Horn or d'Egmont, to have obtained a celebrity as wide-spread and enduring as theirs. So deep was the interest excited by the well-told tale, that Sir Frederick had placed the book beside him while he dined; and he was still so occupied by the heart-rending narrative, that Fegan had made several attempts to attract his notice without success.

"I humbly ax your pardon, Sir Frederick," he at length said, as he displaced the dessert and replaced the carafes and glasses he had in his nervous restlessness just removed;—"I humbly ax your honor's pardon; but there is a great music after the salute, as they call it here, sir, this evening, at the church of the Béguinage."

Sir Frederick appeared still preoccupied with his book: he was too much offended with Fegan's officious interference in bringing the Montessor party upon him in the morning, to yield himself with complacency to his chattering. Too fine a gentleman to expostulate with servants, he had ever found it easier and more dignified to part with them; and having made up his mind to discharge Fegan at Brussels, he had not paused to notify his anger in the interim. Fegan, therefore, who believed his involuntary fault forgiven, because it had not been reproofed, presumed on the supposition, and indulged in his usual garrulity; which Irish servants, even after a long experience of English reserve, always feel it so difficult to restrain.

"And so plaze your honor," continued Fegan, drawing up, "if I was sure it's what we did not go to Brussels this evening, sir, I'd be after axing your lave, Sir Frederick, to go to the salute at the Baginage, in regard of the music, and the eight hundred faymales—a greet sight. And there is a young leedy's maid, who lives with an

ould English gentlewoman down below on the promineed, called the Coupure, nigh to the Rue de Soleil, hard by, convainient to the canal, who offered to take me, if your honor hasn't any call for me, to see the Baginage, and hear the music, sir ? ”

“ You may go, ” said sir Frederick, without taking his eye from his book ; but not a little amused at the topographical knowledge acquired by his servant during a single day. In half an hour afterwards he was himself on his way to the GRAND BÉGUINAGE.

The Grand Béguinage of Ghent is a curious fragment of the monastic establishments of the Low Countries. The institution, unique in its kind, is altogether Belgian ; having been founded by Beghé, the daughter of Pepin of Landen, and the mother of Pepin-le-Gros, in the middle of the seventh century. Other orders rose and fell in the long interval of eleven hundred years ; but female sensibility preserved what female sensibility had created ; and the *Béguines* of Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges, renowned through successive ages of warfare and civil commotion for the ministering charity of the sisterhood, were suffered to exist even by that destructive power which had suppressed all other monkish institutions,—the power of the French Revolution. They still, therefore, remain, in spirit and in form, curious monuments of times whose barbarism and social maladroitness called for and produced a superhuman enthusiasm, to repair its mischiefs, and to pour oil and wine into the festering wounds of outraged humanity.

The sun was setting in cloudless glory, and its beams were caught by the vane of that historical belfry, of which the Gantois are so proud, and from which Charles the Fifth showed the Duke of Alva the extent of the magnificent city which the minister proposed to raze to the ground. * The ornamented gables of the ancient buildings were steeped in crimson light, and the Gothic casements shone like an artificial illumination. The brazen dragon, carried off from Bruges in the time of the crusades, was bright above all ; and the carillon of the square tower beneath pealed forth a quaint Flemish melody, to which the sober citizens seemed to move in just time and

* “ Quand le Duc fut descendu, l'Empereur lui demanda combien il croyait qu'il fallait de peaux d'Espagne pour faire un *gant* de cette grandeur ? ”—The pun is untranslatable.

measure. It was still the Ghent of the Artevelde;* and it addressed itself to the imagination of one, whose views of society had hitherto been directed to external forms, more than to the great movements of the social springs on which the happiness of masses depends.

Sir Frederick had already reached the solitary quarter of the Béguinage before he was aware of his approach. He stood in the midst of the irregular space, which resembles the *close* of an English cathedral. A Gothic and very ancient church formed its centre. One venerable tree threw out its far-spreading foliage. Numerous small and curious buildings rose irregularly on every side, each distinct from the other, and closed by a narrow door, having over it a niche filled by the image of a saint, or the horrors of a crucifixion. From the casement was generally suspended a basket of shrubs and flowers, the cultivation of which formed the only enjoyment permitted to the servants of God and sisterhood of charity. All around was solitary and silent, save only the tolling of the bell which announced the coming ceremony. Sir Frederick paused for a moment, doubtful whether he might proceed to the church, into which the officiating priests, with their floating stoles, their broad sashes, and cocked hats under their arms, had already entered.

The bell ceased, and every door flew open. A strange rout of forms peopled the hitherto vacant court, which realised, by their phantom air, the opening of the tombs of some monastic cemetery, and the giving up of their buried vestals. Nearly seven hundred of the sisterhood, habited in the strange dress, which admits of no distinction of outline, hurried from the surrounding dwellings. Some hobbled, some glided, some tripped, as disparity of age and spirits inclined or compelled. A few, in more flowing drapery, were mantled and veiled by that coquettish remnant of the Spanish toilet, so universal in Brabant, the *faïlle*—the long pending black silk scarf which falls from the head to the feet, and is managed by the expert with an art early acquired, to conceal or to reveal, as the views of the wearer may happen to direct. All passed on, all

* A name now rendered familiar to the English reader by the beautiful dramatic poem of Mr. Taylor.

poured into the open portals of the church ; save some lagging or ancient sister, infirm or over-cautious, stopping to take in her birdcage, to close her casement, or to turn the key in the door of her little *ménage*.

But, among the pious sisterhood, Sir Frederick did not discover any figure resembling that of the *religieuse* of the hospital of St Jean, *la Sœur Greite* of the Tour des Princes.

Sir Frederick, with an *arrière-pensée*, scarcely acknowledged to himself, that Madame Marguerite, by naming the Béguinage, had given him a sort of indication that she too might be of the congregation, approached the entrance of the church at the moment when the *Blouse* of the Scamp gallery arrived at it. A slight bow of mutual recognition was exchanged ; a certain air of the world, never to be mistaken under any disguise, convinced the fastidious English gentleman, that the supposed peasant in the waggoner's frock, who talked *virtù* with the decision of one well versed in his subject, was in fact himself a gentleman, and that it was perfectly safe to address him.

“ I believe,” he said, smiling, “ it is permitted to strangers to join this fair congregation and offer up a prayer to St. Beghé.”

“ Oh yes ! Allow me to conduct you. St. Beghé is a most liberal saint, and her sisterhood are as little *cagotes* as herself.”

“ What a multitude !” said Sir Frederick, pausing at the threshold of the temple.

“ This is the *état-major* of the order,” said the *Blouse*. “ The sisters are well lodged here, and live, you see, with open doors. They have never, in fact, been cloistered ; their vocation is with the world.”

“ And do they take no vows ?” asked Sir Frederick.

“ *Pardon, monsieur !* they make one vow—that of chastity, for the time being. It happened shortly before our revolution, that a young gentleman of high family in Brussels fell in love with a young and beautiful artist. They were on the point of being married, when their friends interfered and separated them. The young man nearly lost his reason, and the girl threw herself into the order of the *Béguines*. The revolution arrived. They were not idle, the *Béguines*, during the Four Days ; and the young artist was among the most active in attending on the *ambulances*. Her lover was

among the wounded patriots; and her skill and attention saved his life. They fled together from the hospital, were married, and enjoyed a few months of perfect felicity, and then were separated for ever! His wound re-opened, and a consumption ensuing, he died, leaving her a small income. She has again retired to our Béguinage, and is now one of the *sœurs chambrées* or *semi-dévotés*, to whom the *coiffe* is protection; and who, adopting the habit of the order when they please, go about, of course doing works of faith and charity, for the love of Our Lady, and of St. Beghé."

"There is a Madame Marguerite," said Sir Frederick, with some hesitation, "whom I have accidentally met—an artist,—who, from her dress, may be one of these *Dames chambrées*."

"Perhaps," said the *Blouse*. "But she is gone to Brussels. She passed you in that calèche which issued from the gates of *le Petit Béguinage* as you entered."

Sir Frederick was something stunned by the information. It was not exactly the intelligence which his *amour-propre* was prepared for.

They had now entered the church: some hundreds of white coifs and black habits filled its vast nave; and groups of black-mantled females knelt in front of the altar. The greater number, with their faces buried in their hoods, seemed lost in perfect abstraction and intensity of prayer. But here and there, a pale and melancholy female, with her visage raised towards the altar-piece, seemed as if in personal colloquy with the protecting saint: her hands, at the same time, being extended above the level of the head, and preserved steadily without motion, gave to such figures the perfect resemblance of a statue, as beautiful and as lifeless. In this mass of female devotion, one male head alone was visible beyond the altar rails where the officiating priest stood in his clerical habiliments: it was the Irish head of Lawrence Fegan.

Notwithstanding an abstraction of mind that had carried his thoughts far from the Béguinage of Ghent, the music which followed the short and simple ceremony of the *salut* gradually engrossed the attention of the English connoisseur. The contrast of the instrumental music with the not very harmonious voices of the sisterhood was marked. Sir Frederick was entranced. He asked the name of the composer.

“ It is by our compatriot Grétry,” replied the *Blouse*, “ his famous morceau the ‘ *Confitebor tibi Domine*,’ which he composed at Rome, and sent to his native city, Liége, to be played on some public occasion. It has been appropriately chosen by the lady who gives this fête to the sisterhood of St. Beghé : for the saint was, like Grétry, a native of that focus of Belgian genius and patriotism, the province of Liége. ”

“ And what is the occasion of this fête ? ”

“ It is given by a lady who received her early education and shelter in some passing adversity, it is said, in a Belgian Béguinage. She is the widow of a Belgian Prince too, Madame Schaffenhauseu.”

Sir Frederick started ; and the divine harmonies of Grétry breathed in vain. Without the courage to ask if the Princess was present, he resolved to depart for Brussels immediately ; and scarcely waiting for the conclusion of the *Confiteor*, he took leave of his friend in the *Blouse*, with many acknowledgments, and almost with regret. He had scarcely, however, issued from the gates of the chapel, when he was followed by his new acquaintance, who presented him a card which he had dropped in drawing out his handkerchief. It was the address of the lace-manufacturer of La Puterie.

Sir Frederick, in acknowledging the civility, observed, that “ he should have been sorry to have lost it ; it was the address of a person to whom he had been recommended to show him a fine picture by Vandyke. ”

“ You will be much gratified,” replied the Belgian. “ The entrance to such houses in Brussels will lay open to you cabinets of living antiquity quite as curious as their own collections. Brussels contains two distinct worlds—two ages. Our *salons* in the Haute Ville affect the tone and manners of French society, and are altogether European ; but the Basse Ville is a chronicle of the old times, a monument of the Flemish manners of former ages. Its society is composed exclusively of those ancient and respectable families, who pride themselves on preserving unaltered the customs, habits, and language of their forefathers. It is really a pleasure to breathe the perfume of antiquity they exhale ; for with them alone is to be found the rude but frank simplicity, dignified with certain etiquettes, as old as the time of Albert and Isabella. ”

“ I fear,” said Sir Frederick, as they walked along, “ that my visit as a purchaser of pictures will not obtain me admission to view and study these originals. ”

“ May I beg to know by whom you are recommended to M. Janssens? ”

“ By Madame Marguerite. ”

“ Madame Marguerite gives us a picture herself for our exhibition this year, taken from an episode of the Four Days. ”

“ Are you acquainted with her? ”

“ Scarcely. She is one of those persons who are *plus célèbres que connues*; but I have seen her works—*c’est un pinceau hardi*. ”

They had now reached the *Hôtel de la poste*. Horses were putting to a calash at the gate. Sir Frederick had already made up his mind to leave for Brussels *instantanément*. He had two motives for the abruptness of his resolution : the Princess of Schaffhausen was probably at Ghent, and Madame Marguerite was positively at Brussels.

“ Can I have horses? ” he asked.

“ The only horses we have, we are putting to for this gentleman,” replied the ostler. “ We should have secured horses for you, sir; but your valet said you would remain at Ghent this evening. ”

At this moment Fegan appeared, crossing the *Kantur*, with a smart *grisette* hanging on each arm. They were upon the point of entering the theatre to the left of the hotel; but Sir Frederick beckoned to Fegan, who with a confused look obeyed the call, and his two *protégées* passed unescorted into the *salle de spectacle*.

The gentleman in the *blouse* had made a proposition, to which Sir Frederick readily acceded, that they should proceed together in the calash as far as Alost, where the former was going to remain for a few days; and that the latter should there take fresh horses for Brussels, which he might easily reach by midnight.

In five minutes the carpet-bags of the English traveller were disposed of in the carriage, and he was seated *tête-à-tête* with his new friend; while Fegan, who occupied the box, always delighted with change and ready for movement, scarcely gave a sigh to the ladies of his thoughts, then quietly awaiting his arrival in the parterre of the theatre.

Fegan’s was the true Irish temperament, to which excitement is

always welcome and change pleasant ; and to him might have been appropriated that motto of the ancient knights— “ *Dieu, le roi, et les dames,* ” which expresses no higher principle than the instinct by which Fegan was animated, to pray, to love, and to fight, when and wherever the occasion might offer. As yet the gentle and even disposition of the good Flemings had furnished him with no opportunity for indulging the last of these propensities ; and the organ of *rowing*, that predominant organ in Irish phrenology, had remained in abeyance.

The evening was as delicious and balmy as ever followed an Italian sunset. The noble road through which the travellers passed, exhibited on every side evidences of the prosperity of the people : hop-grounds, that looked like miniature forests ; red-tiled and white-washed cottages, draped with vines and surrounded by gardens ; with reposing groups seated at the doors in the enjoyment of their evening’s carouse, that repeated in endless succession the groupings of Teniers and the compositions of Ostade.

Sir Frederick was sunk for the first half hour in one of those pleasant reveries derived from health and the influence of new and pleasant objects on an excited imagination. He smiled to find himself journeying in company with an utter stranger ; and to find that stranger, though dressed like one of the peasantry of the country, of elegant manners, and full of intelligence and local information. On taking off his glove, the Belgian had displayed a very white hand ; an antique ring sparkled on his finger, and he had struck a tiny repeater as they left the barrier of Ghent. Could this be a specimen of the Belgian yeoman, or of the gentleman farmer of Brabant ? A few words which fell from him, leading to the inference that he had recently visited Italy, set conjecture again at work.

“ There is just now, ” he said, “ in the horizon, that beautiful green tint, so prevalent in the sunset skies of Italy ; and something in these fertile plains, that recalls the luxurious richness of the plains of Lombardy. ”

“ It is astonishing, ” said Sir Frederick, “ that, with such agricultural prosperity, the Belgians ever thought of trying the hazardous experiment of a revolution. ”

“ It is, at least, a proof that we had wants of a higher character than corn and hops can supply, ” was the spirited answer.

“ And yet there seems to be some discrepancy of opinion concerning the necessity of the revolution, even among the very few persons with whom I have had occasion to speak.”

“ This ever must be the case, where particular interests are compelled to give place to a general impulse : but these local and personal differences must eventually disappear. Even now, the bitterness of discussion is passing away ; and all classes are beginning to settle down in their new political position, like travellers in a diligence after the first stage. Should foreign intrigue or local inconveniences interfere with this coming unity, and again sound the tocsin of discontent, they will only serve to mark how small and circumscribed are the exceptions to that unanimity which binds our several provinces in one sentiment of national emulation and national independence. As far as we have hitherto gone, every measure of the government (the most national government of Europe) has been a positive advance in the march of improvement. Our ministers are men of business. We have no Alberonis, no Kaunitzes, no Talleyrands, none of the old school of diplomacy, of the finessing and jesuitical school of the Italians, introduced by women and priests into the north and west of Europe. Our ministers must be of the people, and with the people, and for the people. Their views, their sympathies, must be popular and Belgian : and this is one of the causes of the vigilance of our opposition, who fear French influence, and dislike the returning power of the priesthood.”

“ Have you then a liberal opposition in your Chambers? One might think the measures of your government sufficiently popular in themselves—republican, indeed, to satisfy the most *exagérés*.”

“ Oh yes ! we have an opposition, a very strenuous and a very honest one, standing on the frontiers of national opinion, and watching the insidious advance of the insidious principle of the *juste-milieu* ; which is suspected of influencing deeply even the most liberal cabinets of Europe.”

The travellers now reached Alost, the frontier town between Flanders and Brabant ; whose ancient forms, and fine Gothic church, were rendered more striking by the dim light through which they were seen. The gentlemen left the carriage, and continued their conversation under the porch of the inn, to which the slow movements of the Brabançon ostler afforded sufficient time. A mounted

groom with a led horse was waiting for the *Blouse*, who, in unbuckling the belt which bound his waist, and exchanging his casquet for a hat, observed—

“ I strongly recommend you to adopt the *blouse*, if you are travelling through the Low Countries. It is light, loose, and clean; and, above all, popular beyond expression.”

“ Add, too,” said Sir Frederick, “ that it is a most becoming dress. Is it a revolutionary costume? it has an extremely liberty and equality air.”

“ Yes; the *Altesses Bruxelloises* of Maria Theresa’s epoch would rather stare to see even the *ordre équestre*, or *petite noblesse*, wearing a *blouse*. But it bears on the great past, and greater present. It was, as we see by the illuminated portraits in the Bibliothèque de Bourgogne at Brussels, the prevailing dress of the Low Countries during the fifteenth century. Philippe-le-Bon wears it in one of his many pictures; and, to go still further back, it is the Belgian dress described by the Roman writers under the name of the *Sagum*. It was then probably made, as it now frequently is, of the *toile de chanvre*. The chemises were of serge; for sheep were always abundant here, and the *drap de Flandre, et de Brabant*, before all record. But our *belouse* or *blouse*, which once made an item of the toilet of our native sovereigns, had fallen into desuetude under the Spanish and Austrian regime; and, since the sixteenth century, had been confined to the peasantry, or used, as the least encumbering of all possible dishabilles, by our young men of business, artisans, and artists, in their workshops, counting-houses, and studies. Thus dressed, the revolution found them, when the bells of the city tolled to arms: and habited as they were, they rushed to the combat with such weapons as chance offered. In the hands of the brave, every weapon becomes effective; and so the *blouse* became the uniform of the *Garde Bourgeoise*. When you see that corps drawn out in Brussels, you will say that their uniform is not only the best adapted to military enterprise, but the most picturesque costume which a soldier can adopt.”

“ It is strange,” said Sir Frederick, “ that the *blouse* is still to be found among the peasantry of our agricultural counties; and is worn upon the road, though in white linen, under the denomination of a waggoner’s frock.”

“ You, doubtless, received it from the Low Countries, with our art of making broad-cloth, our municipal institutions, the produce of our kitchen-gardens, and many other valuable adaptations. But I fear I have wearied you with antiquarian trifling. It is, however, my passion : and if in that particular I can be of any use to you at Brussels, which abounds in monuments of the middle ages, pray command me.”

Sir Frederick accepted gratefully what was offered so frankly. Cards were exchanged ; and on reading the name of the stranger, he found that he had made the acquaintance of Monsieur Van H——, the accomplished author of that historical tract, which had so deeply interested him, the *Précis Historique des Troubles de Bruxelles en 1718*.

Like the other accidental acquaintances he had made, Mons. Van H—— was a type of the character and national feelings of the Belgian youth of the day, and one among the many illustrations of the beneficial change in the character of a people effected by the removal of oppressive and anti-national institutions.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BRUSSELS POST-BAG.

If the popularity of the new Belgian government, or of the sovereign whom the people had chosen for their king, were to be measured by the public satisfaction at the birth and baptism of a national prince, as exhibited in the capital and leading towns, it might be thought that a monarchy in name, and a republic in substance, was the most popular form of government in Europe.

The ceremony of the royal christening, celebrated with considerable dramatic effect in the noble cathedral of St. Gudule, was over ; but the confusion, bustle, and temporary increase of population which it had occasioned, were still visible in the streets of Brussels. Some

were detained by the pressure of business, others by the pursuits of pleasure, and many by the necessity of awaiting post-horses; but all probably contributed to swell not a little the revenue of the Belgian post-office, and to cram ambassadors' bags to overflowing.

While every hotel in Brussels contributed its quota, the letters of the guests of the Bellevue alone would have furnished a folio of evidence for future history; and it would have been curious to compare the various views thus transmitted of the same scenes or facts by different individuals; and to note the vast divergences of truth, as refracted by intellects of various density. Among the epistles thus despatched to England, there might have been selected expressions of the feelings and prejudices of all classes in British society. Testimonies thus given upon foregone conclusions, may survive to puzzle future Dalrymples, to mislead a Robinson, or force a Thiers or Barante of another age to sigh for the simple chronicles of earlier times, when the positive fact was given without note or comment, and a date or a name supplied the place of an opinion.

Of this diversity, the following letters may afford a not inadequate sample.

Letter

“ TO THE HON. MRS. MONTAGUE ST. LEGER, AT THE DOWAGER
DUCHESS OF LUDLOW'S, BROOK-STREET, LONDON.

“ Bellevue, Brussels.

“ MY DEAR FAN,—We arrived here last night, and were lodged with difficulty in the Bellevue : the town overflowing, in consequence of the royal christening; *car on singe les légitimes*. Never saw anything like it : but, alas ! what a change ! I miss every one of our old set of Twenty-nine. The Duke D'Aremberg gone; the Prince ill, and sees no one; De Ligne gone; the De Trazigney's absent. The story of the Faubourg St. Germain over again. We have secured rooms *au premier* for the Marchioness, Lady Frances, and *tutte quante*; for they will be vacant when the Confederation arrives. Leopold is going on a royal progress, and there will be nobody here till the anniversary of the Four Days, when the *braves Belges* are

to do all manner of things in their own praise and glory. Observe, I have engaged the rooms by the day ; for I'm sure you'll be glad to be off as soon as you can.

“ The Place Royale, the Park, and all this quarter of the town, were the great scene of the Four Days ; and they still bear the marks of the fact. The Bellevue, which was riddled with bullets, has been put again into repair ; but the next house to it is a ruin ; and there is scarcely a tree in the noble avenue of the Park, which does not bear the marks of balls, while the statues fall far short of their due complement of noses and members. The tree of liberty, *figurez-vous*, and the tri-coloured flag, are planted before the King's Palace and in the Place Royale. The people meantime are plodding about, as if nothing had happened, and the whole country is a *pays de cognac*, as far as we have come—a perfect paradise.

“ I strongly advise your pushing on for the Rhine *now*, and reserving your visit to the Hague till your return. There are very few English at Brussels ; but Lady D——, who remained through the Four Days, has given such descriptions ! She was present when the poor dear Prince of Orange made his *entrée*, when he marched at the head of his army from Vilvorde, with the intention of taking military possession of the city. Unluckily, instead of proceeding immediately, when he would have found the town unprepared for resistance, he lost considerable time in negotiations. A deputation of the citizens, with tri-coloured cockades, came out from the city and persuaded him to enter Brussels, accompanied only by his *état-major* ; which he did, leaving six thousand men and twenty pieces of cannon behind him. At the head of this deputation was, only think !—a Baron D'Hoogvorst, who belongs to one of the noblest families of Belgium. But he is a sort of Lafayette, in his way.

“ The Prince's *entrée* was announced for midday, by his aide-de-camp, our pleasant friend De Cruykenbourg ; and about four thousand men of the *Garde Bourgeoise* were arranged in battle array near the Laeken gate, to receive him. Escorted by these *soldats in-promptu*, and accompanied by six generals and two domestics in livery, he entered the town. Several English ladies followed him, and got on the steps of the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, to see the spectacle. The Prince rode on with his usual air *ouvert, que vous lui connaissez*. On arriving in front of the line, the air was filled with tri-coloured

flags. Every post had its standard ; and those of the eight central posts were rich and remarkable. Every officer, too, was decorated with his scarf and sash ; and even the women and children had the national cockade. He looked round for the orange colours, and not one appeared. What a moment for the hero of Waterloo ! Surrounded by the blue *blouses*, he had more the air of a captive than of a sovereign.

“ Thus placed in a false position, the victim of circumstances over which he had no control, he was obliged to diplomatize.

“ ‘ Brave citizens of Brussels,’ he said, ‘ I thank you ; to *you* the city owes its tranquillity. You see my confidence in you, since I place myself under your guard—[the more fool he !] But why all this military preparation ? Do you think I was coming to destroy the capital ?’

“ And what do you think a fellow in the crowd had the insolence to say ? ‘ We are no children ; we have had a long and severe experience of you ; and we know well enough what we are about !’ It was deplorable to see his immense popularity gone. A strange man, armed to the teeth, rode close beside him ; addressed him boldly, though in an under tone ; and even appeared to threaten him with his bayonet.*

“ At the *Marché aux Herbes*, the Prince had hoped to file off to his own palace, and cried out ‘ *Chez moi, chez moi !*’ but *force lui fut* to follow the line of march. The Regency received him on the steps of the Hôtel-de-Ville ; when he became pale, and hesitated. ‘ Do you think then,’ he said, ‘ gentlemen, that I am come to besiege your city ? The troops will not attack the King’s subjects ; they fight only with his enemies. *Ils n’entreront pas ici ; je suis Belge avant tout.*’

* “ Quand on réfléchit à la situation des esprits dans ce jour d’agitation ; quand on pense que , du milieu d’un peuple exalté et armé qui venait de briser toutes les enseignes de la royauté et de fouler aux pieds la cocarde orange , et qui faisait souvent entendre des cris sinistres , un coup malheureux pouvait partir ! on ne peut s’empêcher d’admirer le noble courage du Prince d’Orange , se dévouant ainsi pour son père , pour son roi ! Quel que soit l’avenir , ce sera une des belles pages de son histoire. ”—*Esquisses Historiques.*

“ The fact is, that old Sir Francis Wronghead, *le papa grognant*, was in fault. But for him, our *Prince adoré* would be King of the Belgians now : as it is, I fear the game is up for ever. Never was such a set of determined blockheads as these *braves Belges*.

“ Now this despatch is for the Confederation of the Rhine in council assembled, either in the blue drawing-room at Arlington-street, or in the *boudoir couleur de rose* on the Terrace. The English, with one or two exceptions, are all Orangists ; and so are the *haute noblesse* of the country, except the Vilain XIV., the Merodes, and one or two more who committed themselves in the Four Days, and so have accepted places under the new regime. The rest have cut and run, and the place is absolutely in the hands of the *canaille* : but this cannot last.

“ We went last night to Sir Robert’s box at the theatre ; and Montessor has fallen desperately in love with a little Belgian actress, who played in ‘ *La Fille de Dominique*, ’ a Mademoiselle Linsel. He says, she is quite as good as Madame Dejaset ; and wants to engage her for our French plays. *C’est une passion, n’en déplaît à miladi*. Lord Alfred *bat la campagne* for his Princess ; her glittering title sparkles before us in the books of the hotels. But, arriving here, we have lost the scent, and are fairly thrown out. Her servants and carriages are at the Groenendal, an old Brabançon auberge, a regular hostel in *la Basse Ville*. Alfred and I went to see it this morning ; but the Princess was not there. She is pottering about her Belgian *terres* in a calash. The *chasseur* thinks they will leave Brussels for the Rhine early in the week. *Tanto meglio*. A castle on the Rhine is the place on earth for softening a woman’s heart.

“ And now for the cream of my letter. While we were waiting for post-horses at Ghent, a monstrous odd-looking, flashy Irishman, after watching us for some minutes, came flourishing up, hat in hand, and announced himself as own man and travelling courier to Sir Frederick Mottram. ‘ His master, ’ he said, ‘ would be happy to see our lordships. He was looking at the pictures everywhere, and had just left the cathedral for the gallery of *one* Mr. Scamp. ’ So to Mr. Scamp’s we scampered ; and there we found Sir Frederick talking *virtù* in a niche, huddled up with a veiled lady. I never saw a poor fellow so confused or so bored !

“ The lady disappeared on our entrance ; and the great commo-
ner, evidently patronising the non-intervention principle, soon after
slipped away himself. We saw no more of him, till, in driving
along the road without the town, we overtook him in a melancholy-
Jaques-like mood, walking under the shade of the trees. Can this
be the stern statesman, the eloquent orator? It is time for Lady
Frances to look to it ; and we are of opinion that she ought not to
lose a moment in coming here. We are all impatient to be off from
Brussels, where we are none of us amused except Montessor, who
finds that *la Fille de Dominique* ‘ *a d’assez beaux yeux pour des
yeux de province.*’ As yet, however, he has not gained admit-
tance to the *coulisse*, nor been presented to the fair Catharine
Biancolelli ; *les mœurs* here are severe.

“ *Sans adieu,* “ B. M. ST. LEGER. ”

“ P.-S.—I have pumped the *confidential* servant, who is a sieve
of the very first order. His master, it seems, is to go forwards to
Germany *instantly*. This have ‘ I thought good to deliver thee,’
that thou mayest lay it before the Congress for their information.
You may add also, that, when there, he is to meet ‘ a peerty,’ as
Paddy calls them, ‘ of Irish quality,’ and a Dr. de Burgo. The
Doctor, I conclude, is a travelling physician ; but who the devil are
‘ the quality?’ B. M. ST. L. ”

Letter

“ TO CORNELIUS MACDERMOT, ESQ., ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, SHAN-
BALLYMAC, KERRY, IRELAND.

“ Hotel de Bellview, Brussels.

“ MY DEAR CORNEY,—You’ll wonder greatly to hear from me
from this outlandish place ; and it is to my own intire amazement
surely that I find myself in it ; and if I wasn’t an ould fool, and the
biggest breathing this day, sorrow step would I put my foot in it ;
and may thank my lady and her new doctor, (a great *che shin*, sir,
one Doctor Rodolf de Burgo, a third cousin, once removed, as he
says, of the Clanrickards ;—but *nabocliah*,) for the way I am in,

after spending more money in the last six months than I'd have occasion for in as many years at Shanballymac, and live like an Irish king, and better.

“ This comes hoping that you are well, also Mrs. Macdermot and the little *colleens*; and, secondly, to say that I must draw on you for another five hundred pounds to carry on the war; which I hope will pay our way to Spaw and back again to Kerry, where my Lady Dogherty has been ordered to drink the Spaw water; she that made such wry faces at Ballyspellan, and had the offer of Mount Pleasant, near the salt water at Dunleary (now Kingstown)! And in regard of the five hundred pounds, my dear Macdermot, if there is not so much in the till, I'd drive them Morans without delay, and sell off the primises. You've been too aisy intirely with them, man alive! Oh! it's myself knows them well: always a sick child, or a bad potatoe saison, and the man a crock, and the woman a poor streal; and they setting up for gentleman farmers, that were no better than cotters on Lord Kinmure's estate, till they came and flopped themselves down upon my green acres, divel's luck to them! offering over the heads of the ould tenants, which was the cause of all the murthurs, and brought three as fine boys to the gallows as ever was hanged, in or out of it. As to the hay harvest, I lave it to your own judgment; but sold it must be, with the stock of Clonmakillen; for, my dear Mac, money I must have, cost what it may, to get out of this humbugging place, where there was no rebellion nor revolution at all; but just as quiet as Shanballymac, the day after the fair. And you'll be wanting the worth of your postage, half of which I've to pay myself before they'll let a taste of this letter pass the post-office! There's liberality for yez, in the Frinch republicans.

“ Well, sir, it's all from bad to worse, from the blessed day I bid farewell to the Hill of Howth. I tould you of the ruination was going on at Brighton, and the junketting and the picnicking of my Lady, and Laura Lady Dickson—and it's prettily picked and nicked too we were; and they tould me by way of a make-weight, that I'd get everything here, sir, for nothing at all at all, and thank me for taking. Oh! yes, indeed! Anyhow, I had my substantial rump-stake, and my glass of port, and my tumbler of punch, at Brighton, not all as one as here, where I dine at a grand table-dot,

covered over with outlandish dishes, and nothing to ate but just a wish-wash of soup and a peck of sparrows, like what the boys after a birding roast fifty on a string in Ireland : and, *onter new*, as my Lady says, it a'n't with sparrows and tom-tits that we put off the people in th' ould times at the Stag's Horns ; but the best of rounds of beef and cabbage, and turkies and trimmings, and the sucking chickens and bacon, and greens. But it makes my Lady faint if I only hint at them times, trying to consale all from the doctor ; as if, sooner or later, the butter won't come out of the stir-about.

“ Well, sir, when I axed them here for parceley and buther to my boiled fowl, divel be if one of them throughout the whole hotel could make out what I meant at all at all !—so judge, sir, whether it's an outlandish place or not : and such waiting at table I never seen, and am often tempted to snatch the napkin out of the waiter's hand, (who calls themselves gossoons,) and show them the way we wait at table in Ireland.

“ Well, sir, it's bad enough for the ating ; but, in regard of the drinking, if you'd give a thousand pounds for a naggin of whisky, you wouldn't get it ; and when I asked for a bottle of Guinness's porter, which you'd think was known all over the wide world, it's a bottle of crusty port they brought me ; and to this blessed hour I've not been able to make them understand me. And here's ' more of the yarn. ' It's up three pair of stairs backwards we're lodged, in the rare of the house, No. 144, (sorrow one less)—*O troyseme*, they call it in French ; and the rooms not bigger than pidgeon-holes, for which I pay the murther and all of money ; for the Bellview is the fashionable place, and none of the great English will go nowhere else : although at first, sir, we got into a mighty nate little hotel, called the Tirelemont, for half the price. But my lady would go to the Bellview as soon as there was room,—room to whip a cat sorrow more !

“ At Ostend, sir, we made acquaintance with a right honorable privy counsellor, and one of the richest and greatest men in England, as the Doctor says, and whose name you have read in the parliament debates a hundred times and more, one Sir Frederick Mottram. Well, sir, I don't know how it was, but the Doctor and my Lady overpersuaded me that it would be the greatest of advantage

to us all to lind him my shirt—my best baby-linen-warehouse shirt, that I got made up expressively for Lady Dickson's party at Brighton, and never was on my back but oncet. But to make a long story short, sorrow sight of the shirt ever I seen since, and my belief is, never will ; for my Lady and the Doctor have made me swear twenty oaths that I'd never mintion the linen to him ; because, they say, it's a tie between us ; and that as long as he keeps my shirt, I've every right and title to axe him a favour, or a place, or something that way. But what the devil, says you, brought a great man like him to be without his linen to forren parts ! Why, thin, divel a know I know ! but this I know full well to my cost, that I never set eyes on him since, though we were to have travelled with him here in our own borouche, and he to pay a third of the horses, as we settled among ourselves.

“ But the divel be in the Doctor, sir, but when all was settled, off he skelps us after a great Princess that he put his *camether* upon ; and thinks she'll do the world and all for us in Germany, and ask us to her castle on the river Rine, which is quite close to Spaw ; for, would you believe it, Mac Dermot dear ! we're not in Germany yet, nor within two days of it, but has to pass through Prussia, sir, first.

“ Well, sir, we might as well have follyed a lepraghan, or a fairy, as this great Princess ; for no sooner we came upon her in one place, but pop she was off to another, travelling with five horses, and we with only a pair, that would sooner die than run ; and has carried off the Doctor's guide-books and maps, and divel mend him ! what business had he to go gosthering after a furrener that he knows nothing about, and I paying him at the rate of two hundred a year to attend me and my Lady ?—for, Corney dear, we are both grown poor crocks ; my Lady has lost a lung, and in the mornings you wouldn't give a pin for me, with a sort of an all-over-ness, and the greatest thust on me ; which makes me drink their ale here, (and good ale it is,) not by pints, but by quarts, in the staminays, which are a sort of taverns, where you get neither to ate or to drink, only a pipe and a pot ; so that I'm fur from well till after dinner, to say nothing of the chalera, which is raging everywhere ; as the Doctor tells uz.

“ And now, Mac Dermot dear, send me the money soon and safe, for sorrow much I've left ; and has a bill running up here as

long as from this to Cork, though we left our Irish footman in Brighton, and have only my lady's own lady's maid, little Kitty Kelly : and hired a young furrenner they call a *walley-de-place*, whom we have for two franks a day. I'll trouble you for change for that ! Well, sir, a frank is a tin-pinny. But, I'm mighty slow at picking up a word of the furren lingo ; and mighty lonely, having no one to spake to me at the staminay, where I pass my mornings, thinking of ould Ireland, while the Doctor and my Lady is making an inventory of all they see and hear.

“ But I'm expecting a young man every day that I cottoned to greetly, at Ostend, one Mr. Fegin, Irish by birth, but bred in England, as he tells me ; and iligent English he has, surely. He is a gentleman bred and born, it seems ; but his people got into trouble, and he was reduced to become own man and gentleman to Sir Frederick Mottram ; and is as comely and genteel a looking lad as you'd wish to see ; and often brings somebody you know yourself to my mind—and maybe we hav'n't plenty of Shanaos together, for he knows as much of county Kerry as if he'd never lost sight of Mangerton. Why, then, 'pon my daisy, I should'nt wonder, after all, if his name was O'Fegan. People often drop the vowel after they get to live in England, which brings to my mind something that I'll just spake to you about in the postscript. So tare it off, before you read it to the mistress : for I know she'll be curious for news from forren parts ; and so concluding.

“ I am, my dear Corney,

“ Your very affectionate and obedient

“ I. D.

“ P.-S. The first time you ride that way, you'll do me the greatest of favours, if you'll call in upon Betty Burke and tell her there's no use in life in pestering me with letters, as she did in England. I know very well it's all that rake of an husband of hers, that drinks her substance, bates her black and blue, and was the raal cause why that brat of a boy went to walk the world. You are my witness I offered to take him in about the place, as soon as he could do anything. As for th' other, was it not her own will to walk off with him to the Foundling, when she was taking up Mary Brady's twins, saying that one might be done for, but two it

would be the ruin of her? So that, if I were on my bended knees before Father Murphy this day, I would swear to a clear conscience. After which, you may give her three pounds for me. Oh! Cornelius Mac Dermot, how the sins of our youth rise up agen us! and if we had life to begin over again, is it after the Betty Burkes, or the likes of them, I'd be trapesing? If any one had tould me that Natty Dogherty would turn out a rich man and a Bart., and marry Miss Kearney, of Fort Kearney, and drive his own coach, and be travelling in furren parts, and taking snaps instead of a drop of poteen—would I have believed them? No, troth! And this often brings my poor sister and brother to mind; and if he had not been hung in the rebellion, and she, poor cratur! had not gone to the bad, though they always looked down upon me, I would be glad to serve them now, though they are gone to another and better world, to which, that we may all come, is the prayer of your assured friend,

I. D.

“ *N. B.* I am promised a frank from the great Mr. Hume's servant, who is in this house, and dines with the King. So you see I have filled out my sheet. But mum about Betty Burke; and whin you mintion her, as my Lady reads all my letters, mind you call her the *black heifer*.

“ *N. B.* There's a power of Irish here, and a fortune might be made by setting up a raal *Irish Hibernian* hotel—and it would be a fine thing to be after making money instead of spinding it; but when I only just hinted it to my Lady, oh, sir! it was *mille murther!* and *wurrestroo!*—and troth, you'd think I had brought ruination upon the Kearneys, of Fort Kearney, seed, breed, and generation!”

“ TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ., STEVEN'S HOTEL, LONDON.

“ Brussels, Hôtel de Tirlemont.

“ MY DEAR HORACE, — Not to lose a moment, I write immediately on my arrival here, and while my cutlet is dressing, to say that I have received your letter, for which a thousand thanks. As you are in London, and Mr. Harris is not, I beg earnestly that on receipt of

this you will go to Carlton-terrace, and make inquiries for my carriage and coachman. I had sent orders to have both despatched here instantly; and I have been at the Bellevue, where I got your letter; but no carriage is come, neither could I get a room to niche myself in. There is something wrong about this unlucky carriage; and I am much inconvenienced by the failure: Harris's people are always so punctual. On the whole, the chances of my wayward, and somewhat inconsiderate journey, thus far, have been in my favour; and I have seen and heard so much that would not have reached me in the ordinary course of travelling, as leaves me nothing to regret. It really does strike me, that the more closely the Belgian people and their revolution are viewed, the more worthy they appear of interest, and of a reflective and attentive consideration.

“The routine of my own particular office, and the all-engrossing interests of the greater events at Paris, had very much distracted my attention, at the time, from what we considered a mere imitative appendix to the French revolt; and you will not be surprised that I should have adopted the notion that the resistance against William was unprovoked. This opinion was strengthened by the reports of our diplomatic agents, whom, I begin to fear, we have too much chosen for their coincidence with our own political dogmas, rather than for the faculty of forming an independent opinion of their own. It was not the boy *attaché* only who treated the affair as a mere mob triumph, unworthy of the notice and protection of a *gentleman*; and you well know the force and influence of that term in England. The fashion was set, and the word had passed; and I begin to suspect that we have been the dupes of our own sarcasms, and too hasty in our conclusions on the Belgian question.

“At every step I have taken since my arrival here, new proofs have forced themselves on my mind of the incompatibility of the Dutch and Belgian character and position, of the diversity of their interests, and the opposition of their sentiments. The antecedents of many centuries might have told us that force alone could amalgamate the two people under one government, and should have led us to foresee that the first opportunity would be seized for breaking up the unnatural alliance.

“The formation of the kingdom of the Netherlands, I am now satisfied, was no better than a mere *coup d'état*; and whether such

violences are nipped in the bud, or are allowed to drag on through years of impunity—whether they induce a prompt reaction, or await the maturity of a tardy revenge, the consequence is ultimately the same.

“ That, however, which the Holy Alliance commenced in force, the Stadtholder was compelled to continue in cunning. The fusion of the two populations being a moral impossibility, nothing remained but to subordinate one of them to the other; to make one portion of the territory a kingdom, and the other a dependent province. But William was a Dutchman : accordingly, in framing a constitution, he adopted the fundamental law of Holland as his basis; and such considerations only were offered to the Belgian notables as were rendered indispensably necessary by the addition of the new provinces to the Dutch territory.

“ The constitution, such as it was, was however necessarily presented to a Belgian assembly, to go through the form of acceptance; * and as the majority turned out to be against the government, the text of their vote was taken with a royal commentary, as sophistical as it was arbitrary, and their decision virtually set aside by an interpretation. Here, then, was a second *coup d'état*; and as things ill begun make themselves strong by ill, all possibility of equal and constitutional government was overthrown. Injustice accordingly followed injustice in quick succession. The Dutch language was imposed on the Belgian tribunals, and the Belgian advocates stricken with an incapacity to pursue their business; while the people could not follow their own law proceedings.

“ Then came the interference of the government with the public instruction; an interference which we at home regarded as enlightened and philosophical, but which I now see clearly was fanatical and sectarian—a counterpart of what has been attempted by the

* On this occasion 796 deputies voted against the constitution, 527 for it. It was, therefore, virtually rejected. But of the 796 opponents, 126 had, in voting, declared their opposition to have been founded on religious grounds; and about one sixth of the Belgian notables did not attend. William, accordingly, declaring the motivated votes to be in reality affirmative, and the absentees to have given a *silent approval*, pronounced by proclamation the constitution to have been accepted.

Orange party in Ireland. That it was good policy to break down the power of the Catholic priesthood, may be true; that a better education of the people was necessary than the priests would willingly concede, must be admitted: but the hasty and foolish manner in which these reforms were commenced, stamped William's government with a fatal character of violence and bigotry.

“ Another consequence of a proconsular government of Belgium was the exclusion of the Belgians from place and honours. * The proportions of the Dutch and Belgian representatives to the respective populations, were stamped with a similar inequality; and the fiscal and financial arrangements uniformly showed a consequent leaning to Dutch interests. The trial by jury was also arbitrarily abolished, to make way for a criminal procedure, which was a simple return to the ancient code of Holland. If, then, there was no one especial act to compare with the royal ordonnances of Charles the Tenth, there were fifteen years of galling tyranny, subjecting four millions of subjects to the sway of two; and that minority unsupported by superior instruction, and undignified by the *prestiges* of a military occupation.

“ It has been said, that the physical condition of Belgium being prosperous, the people were without excuse for separating from Holland. I confess I do not see the force of this consequence. The beast of the field is driven by hunger; the civilized man is influenced by higher motives. Admitting the fact, prosperity could not have abided under a regime which submitted the agriculture** and manufactures of the south to the commercial interests of the north. But were the long series of arbitrary proceedings against the press nothing? — the direct and scandalous evasions of the charter? — the illegalities in the dispensation of justice? — and the excitations of

* There were 2377 Dutch officers in the military service, while 200 only were Belgians. To make this injustice more crying, it was arranged that in the colonies, where the service was fatal and the civil influence of the soldier nothing, the proportions should be directly reversed.

** In point of fact, a tax on flour, and a tax on the slaughtering of cattle, which pressed with crushing severity on the lower classes, were among the immediate causes of that casual violence which caused the explosion.

the religious feelings of the people? These, if they do not excuse rebellion, will sufficiently explain it.

“ Still, nothing can be more unlucky than the separation of Holland and Belgium. The two countries, united, might have told for something in the balance of Europe; separated, they too probably may — some say *must* — fall the prey of the conqueror on the first recurrence of a general war.

“ You will wonder at this sudden change in my opinions; but, since my arrival here, I have read much, and conversed with several men of very superior attainments, of all parties. Nothing is spoken or thought of but politics, and the very common people see and understand their own interests; so that information forces itself at every turn. Politics have not, however, been my only occupation: the arts in Belgium are not to be neglected; and they have given me more pleasure than the conversation even of these clever Belgian radicals, for such they are. I have, however, been greatly surprised and amused by the general dissemination of sound political knowledge, though applied to opinions I do not always exactly approve; and I begin to find a man can be a tory in one country, and something not quite a radical in another: things change their aspect so much in different circumstances.

“ Apropos to the arts, I have picked up an artist of rare genius and abilities. She (for it is a lady that is in question) would be a dangerous acquaintance for your equanimity, as she might formerly have proved to mine; but now (I own it with a sigh) ‘man delights not me, nor woman either.’ Still this woman interests me, and for reasons which I have not time, nor indeed inclination, now to detail.

“ Good night! Direct to me *poste restante*, as I must change my quarters; and write to me without loss of time.

“ Yours ever,

“ F. M.”

“ P.-S. The town is overflowing; and I am lodged in an old-fashioned, but very comfortable, hotel (out of the gangway of fashion), which recalls the hostels of the divine middle ages.”

CHAPTER XVI.

BRUSSELS.

SIR Frederick Mottram, on his arrival in Brussels, had vainly tried for admission at the hotels of the Place Royale. He had been obliged to descend to the Basse Ville; but the entire *ordre équestre* or provincial gentry of the country, seemed to have congregated in the usually tranquil quarters of the Holland Hof and the Groenendal. As a *mezzo termine*, he found himself seated in the *salle à manger* of the clean, modest, old-fashioned, and very Brabançon hotel of Tirlemont, which stands, as it were, half-way between the old town and the new.

This *salle* formed one side of the court-yard, into which it opened; and as the lord of Mottram Hall, the master of the most luxurious mansion in London, threw himself on a high-backed oak chair, opposite a plain deal table, and wrote his letters by the flickering light of a pair of tallow candles before him, and the flare of a lamp that looked of the sixteenth century, he was more amused than annoyed by his unwonted position. He looked around him: the floor was sanded; an antique buffet filled the lower part of the apartment, and the walls were covered with a painting in oil, representing scenes and groups worthy of Watteau. The conversation parties, there depicted, were of the time of the Austrian archduchesses, and were evidently a century old; showing how popular the arts had been in the Low Countries, and how extensive was the patronage given them, not by the great merely, but by the middle and lower classes.

The Tirlemont had been an *auberge* time immemorial; and some *Canaletti* of the parish of St. Gudule had probably executed this painting at a much less expense to the purchaser, than the gilt leather hangings would have cost with which the palaces and châteaux of the seigneurs were then adorned, who could have enriched

their cabinets with the works of Rubens, Vandyke, Teniers, or Rembrandt.

A frugal supper, tardily and with difficulty procured, (for at that late hour the kitchen hearths of the sober Tirlemont were cold,) was attended by *la fille de quartier*, a light-footed little Brabançonne, whose services Fegan more than shared, and would fain have dispensed with altogether : a desire intimated by his frequent ‘ Now don’t be after troubling yourself, mamizelle, *s’il vous plaît*.’ Meantime the hostess herself, *la Veuve Doran*, endeavoured to make amends for the inconveniences of her overthronged house and exhausted pantry, by those little courtesies and attentions which frequently supply the place of more substantial advantages.

The expected departure of a baronial family from Namur on the following day (who occupied *le bel appartement*) was to furnish a more suitable lodging to the late and last arrived guest, who, in the interim, was nighed in a little sleeping room, with a single casement which opened on the noble and antique towers of St. Gudule. The beautiful and Gothic tracery, silvered by the moon-light, fixed for a moment his sleepy eyes. He thought of her who could haply have given some moral interest to that superb object of art and monument of time ; and he indulged in a reverie, between hope and conjecture, as to the probability of another interview ; and then sank into a slumber unknown to the anxious minister, the worn-out legislator, the *blasé* man of fashion, and disappointed man of feeling, of less than a month back.

It was the deep bell of St. Gudule, at nine the following morning, that disturbed his refreshing sleep. He descended to an excellent breakfast in the public room, already half filled with miscellaneous guests.

“ Plaze your honor,” said Fegan, who was in waiting, “ Mamizelle tells me that there’s a sermon at ten, and high mass at eleven, in the greet cathedral over forenent us ; and a celebraited preacher, Abby Surlycraw, Sir Frederick, that all the town’s running mad after, speceally the Leedies,—and the greetest of favorites he is with thim, I hear. So I was thinking, Sir Frederick, that if you’d have no further occasion for me till dinner dressing time, I’d just step across to my duty, sir, and return after mass and the sermon to attind your honor.”

“ But you will not understand a sermon preached in French, Fegan.”

“ Sure I’ll understand it as well as the Latin, Sir Frederick.”

To this there was no reply ; and the next moment Fegan was seen giving his arm to “ *la fille de quartier*,” with a large nosegay at his breast, and his hat set upon three hairs. Sir Frederick was confirmed in his own impulse to follow the example of his servant, and visit St. Gudule, by the remark of a young priest (who, in his clerical habit, sat at breakfast with one of the *Garde Bourgeoise*,) that the mass to be performed was by Cherubini, and that it was to be executed by the first artists of Brussels, under the direction of Monsieur Fétis, *maitre de chapelle* to the king.

Nothing can be more striking as a monument of architectural antiquity, than the noble church which (dedicated to the patroness saint of Brussels) is to the capital of Belgium what the Duomo is to Milan, an object of national pride and of pious veneration. Venerable and time-touched by the passage of eight hundred years, it rears its Gothic front on the declivity of a hill, between two lofty and massive square towers. The entrance is approached by a flight of steep steps ; and discloses the vast perspective of the body of the church, which is lighted by a double range of painted glass casements, miraculous evidences of the arts in the Low Countries during the earliest epochs of the middle ages.

The subjects of many of these windows were historical facts still influencing the institutions of modern Europe. Their many-coloured lights fell in splendour upon the colossal statues which seem to guard on either side the noble nave ; and called out the radiance of the bronze and golden vessels of the grand choir, its antique altar and tabernacle. Under a mausoleum of black marble, repose the ashes of the bold, bustling Dukes of Brabant ; with the brazen lion of Belgium *couchant* above them. Beyond, on the windows of the transept, a remoter epoch was chronicled in the figure of the Emperor Charlemagne prostrate before the church in the performance of a religious office.

The artist eye, the kindling imagination of the English virtuoso, found full occupation in the spectacle that presented itself. Pausing for a while on the threshold of the great western portals, to take in the splendid and imposing effect of the whole structure, he pro-

ceeded along the thronged avenue of the lateral aisle, and placed himself against a column immediately opposite the preacher.

The pulpit, celebrated as *la chaire de Verbruggen*, beautifully carved, told the story of the expulsion from Paradise of the first parents of mankind. It was occupied by a preacher, whose head, action, and manner were all picturesque and dramatic. He was addressing a multitudinous congregation composed chiefly of females. A few old gentlemen, and here and there a group of peasants in their *blouses*, standing with open mouths and eyes vacantly staring on the preacher, were the only males at the foot of the pulpit; while reposing upon velvet chairs sat the *bel-air* piety of Brussels, presenting as brilliant a parterre of bright colours, as the *balcon* of the theatre on a first representation. Beyond these privileged saints, on wooden chairs, were the *petite bourgeoisie* of the *Basse Ville*, who were again shaded off by the *campagnards* of the adjacent arrondissements, whose bronzed, broad faces, and antique costume, contrasted with the fair physiognomies and fashionable toilet of the interior circle.

The preaching of the ABBÉ SOUSLACROIX, *le petit Bourdaloue* of the season, was by turns vehement, impressive, familiar, and dramatic; and while every bright eye was fixed on his animated countenance, he thundered forth his text at intervals, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation;" and every repetition was accompanied by a sarcasm of the inefficiency of *oraisons* whose source was no deeper drawn than from the lips of the suppliant.

The sermon over, there was a rush of the whole congregation towards the choir. The *beau monde* hurried to the skreen on either side, and were admitted by the important *Suisse*, who threw open those gates of salvation to the brilliant hats and showy bonnets only; while the Brabançon coif and *blouse* ranged themselves as they best might in front of the altar. The organ pealed, and the full orchestra gave forth the solemn strains of Cherubini, accompanying the most magnificent of all dramatic exhibitions, the ceremony of the mass. The choral voices filled the vaulted space with harmonies well calculated to 'take the prisoned soul, and rap it in elysium.'

The procession which precedes the celebration of the mystery commenced from the north side of the high altar. The acolytes, bearing tapers, and clothed in white cassocks and crimson sashes,

were followed by the thurifers, tossing their silver censers in the perfumed air, and opening the procession of the priestly band, who, two by two, with folded hands and downcast eyes, robed in snowy surplices and rich stoles, moved slowly on. Then came the dignitaries of the church, capped and mitred, in habits of rival magnificence of gold and silver tissue, and with crosses of gold or wands of ivory.

The whole distributed themselves according to their rank and office. The high altar, whose gemmed tabernacle blazed with the light of many tapers, became the scene of those mystic movements and reiterated genuflections, each of which indicated some miracle or mystery preceding that greatest of all mysteries, which is announced by the tinkling bell, and accompanied by a universal prostration. All were prostrate in form, as in mind. The English protestant alone stood erect, excited, not deceived; and smiling proudly in the conviction that *he* was not one of those who debased the judgment God had given him, by crediting a miracle, contradicted by the evidence of the senses, the great fountain of all positive knowledge, and the oracles of God's first and most undeniable revelations to man.

He stood with a curved lip, and a half-closed eye fixed upon the performance of that awful act which none but he dared gaze upon; the act which, by a grace passing all understanding, converts the grosser elements of matter into the spiritual essence of the Godhead. The word "transubstantiation" escaped his contemptuous lips:—a single word in obvious and reproachful reply was muttered beside him! He started: what a volume was in that word! It seemed to reprove intolerance, and to demand indulgence for one mystery more than the many his reformed faith still retained. He was surrounded by women, whose brows pressed the marble pavement: whence, then, came the sound? Did it arise from his own imagination? or did reason suggest the necessity of bearing with the lingering errors of humanity, which the progressive light of time and influence of knowledge had not yet universally dissipated?

When the elevation of heads, and the magnificent burst of harmony, vocal and instrumental, at length confounded all ideas in one overwhelming flood of delicious sensations, Sir Frederick was relieved and transported. The objects he gazed on, the odours he breathed, the music he listened to, all was the enchantment of the

imagination, the inebriety of the senses. He felt the grandeur of the system, and the deep knowledge of human nature that had founded a church destined to subdue the barbarous energies of a ferocious race, and redeem society from the verge of utter dissolution. This church, at first the barrier protecting by its terrors the many from the violence of the few, and ultimately the tower of strength of the few against the many, had served both its purposes. It was now mouldering away before greater and subtler combinations. So too was the church which had succeeded to it; the cold, inconsistent, powerful, but unimaginative church of the Reformation. What was to come next? Never before had the church been in such danger, in the well-prejudiced mind of this Oxford-bred, orthodox lay-impropriator, as at the moment when, under the excitement of such external impressions, that great and philosophical question suggested itself! There was more intellect even in the doubt it awakened, than in all the logical subtilties that had wasted the energies of his fresh young mind.

As he gazed and listened, what a sweep of events rushed before him, from the first concretion of European society, to the revolution hardly yet consummated! What errors, what illusions! (errors that were inevitable, illusions that were expediences!) once blindly received and passionately adored; now laid bare, exposed, and trampled on, as the brute necessities of humanity were superseded by higher wants and more intellectual pursuits. All splendid as was the exhibition now witnessed, the magnificent ritual of the most ancient and powerful of christian churches, who were they that now stood around to wonder and to reverence it?—Women and children! of the other sex, a few of the old and feeble among the higher classes, and of the rude and ignorant among the lowest! But where were the legislators of the land, the representatives of the people—where the people themselves, the intellectual reforming people, who fought the fight of the Four Days? Where was the royal successor of the Counts of Flanders, the Dukes of Brabant and Burgundy, the Austrian Archdukes? He, the king of the people, professed another faith,—a faith, for which, on that spot, men and women had been burned and buried alive! What a contrast with the image pictured on those brilliant panes,—the Emperor of the West, the representative of the Cæsars, grovelling on the earth before

that power of which he was himself the founder, the champion, the agent, and the—dupe!

The ceremony was now concluding by the imposing procession of its retiring ministers. The vaulted roof rang with peals of the valedictory melody, which gradually faded away in sighing echoes. The congregation poured forth through the great portals and lateral issues; the lights of the *maître-autel* were extinguished; and the church was rapidly left to solemn silence and picturesque solitude. Here and there, a lingering votarist still knelt before a lateral altar; or muttered over her breviary, as she lolled on her chair in the nave. One, with bended knees, and upraised hands, and elevated head, endeavoured to expiate by a physical effort some moral frailty; and another strove to hang a votive offering on the statue of a saint, who seemed to reject the proffered homage. The offering was a waxen ear; but the votarist was too short of stature to attain to the elevation on which the statue stood.

After more than one effort witnessed by the English traveller, who was passing out at the moment, he advanced to tender his services. The devotee placed the well-formed ear into his hands, and he hung the red ribbon attached to it on the finger of the patron saint. He was then in the act of retreating, when the voice of the person he had served arrested his attention.

“*Ha! ha! Goeden dag, mynheer; bon jour et grand merci,*” she said in a voice of welcome. “*Vous voilà dans la capitale des Flamands de Flandres!*”

“Ah! is it you, *ma mère?*” said Sir Frederick, much pleased to meet again *la Mère Greite*, whose white coif, veiled by a *faïlle* of black crape, had rendered her usual costume not immediately recognizable.

“Yes, it is I,” she said in a low voice, as they passed down the nave together, and issued out of the western gate. “I am at Brussels on a mission in waiting on the new hospital *de la Vieillesse Malheureuse*. I left Ghent after vespers last night, and passed you at Alost. You stopped to buy a basket of the *couques d’Asche*.—I suppose for some friend, probably at Brussels? I saw your servant driving a hard bargain for them.”

“I have no friend at Brussels,” said Sir Frederick, “except you will allow me to consider you as one.”

“ *Eh! mais volontiers.* Besides, it is a good augury that we should have met under the protection of the blessed and holy St. Gudule, and that an offering has been made by your hands to our lady and patroness.”

“ Oh! the ear?—And what does that mean, good mother?”

“ It means, that the person in whose name I made that offering has succeeded in her desires by means of the ear; and so she makes this tribute to the glory of St. Gudule.”

“ And you think such an offering can propitiate Heaven?”

“ And why not?—Do not you Reformed, as you call yourselves, try to propitiate Heaven?”

“ Not with waxen ears,” said Sir Frederick, smiling.

“ *Hein!* Well, you pray to stop rain, or for the destruction of your enemies. If you can arrest the laws of nature and direct the will of Heaven by words, why may we not by the expression of our good intentions through the medium of an image? *La différence est peu de chose.*”

Sir Frederick was struck both by the manner and the matter of this remark. The voice was less guttural than that of *la Mère Greite*; and the ‘*gros bon sens flamand*’ had taken a taint of reasoning not to be expected from one of her habit and calling.

They had reached the last step of the flight leading from the church, when she paused, and said,

“ You call me ‘ your friend.’ — Well, I accept the office: if you are ailing, I will attend on you, and I have great experience. I am a *Sœur hospitalière* of old date. If you are going to remain here, and wish to see the hospitals, I will conduct you. If you stay to witness the grand anniversary, I will put you in the way of getting cheap, good lodging, in the Old Town; for it strikes me, travelling as you do, you are not rich, though your servant (whom I take to be a poor relation, for he is like you) told one of our sisters, who is an Irishwoman, that you are very rich, and are only travelling to get rid of your wife. But *c’est égal*. If you remain here, I can place you in some of the old quarters of Brussels, in the Isle of St. Géry, or near the Place des Wallons, the heart of the old Flemish and Brabançon society. *Dites donc, que voulez-vous?*”

Sir Frederick started and coloured at all these allusions to his circumstances, and at the imputed possible resemblance between

himself and his servant; but recovering hastily, he answered, "I thank you a thousand times. Were it my intention to remain in Brussels, I should avail myself gratefully of your offer : at present I have no plans. I wait for my carriage, and am lodged in a modest little hotel, quite close to St. Gudule, the Tirlemont."

"Ah! so you are at the Tirlemont! It is an historical place. It was the head quarters of the *état-major* on the night before the Dutch evacuated Brussels. What an event! what a night! I remember passing the *état-major* at midnight. I was following a bier on which lay one of our wounded. It had another appearance then, the Tirlemont. Well, if you want me, I am always to be heard of at the Grand Béguinage."

Sir Frederick reiterated his thanks, and added,

"Should I be induced to protract my stay, I will avail myself of your kindness : at all events, I should be glad to visit your hospitals ; and as I have nothing to do to-day. . . ."

"*Aujourd'hui? impossible!* I have engagements that will occupy me; but I will make arrangements, and let you know. What can you do with yourself in the mean time?"

He paused a moment, and then drawing a card from his pocket, he said, "I have got here the address of Monsieur Janssens of La Puterie, who has a picture by Vandyke on sale. It was given me by Madame Marguerite, the artist. Can you tell me, has she too arrived last night at Brussels?"

"*Ah çà!* I cannot positively answer for that. I told you that she was coming here about her great picture, and I saw her at Ghent yesterday; but her movements are uncertain. *C'est une originale que Madame Marguerite; d'ailleurs, assez bonne femme.*"

"That," said Sir Frederick, "is just the epithet I should never think of applying to her."

"Well, you are wrong; *c'est une bonne pâte.* But I have a consultation at our hospital to attend. Adieu, monsieur—*au plaisir, n'est-ce pas?*"

"Whereabouts lies the Puterie?" asked Sir Frederick, detaining her.

"Close at hand; you will find no one at home there, just now. Sunday is a great festival with us. Follow the crowd, who are all going in one direction. After mass, every one goes to the Park.

By and bye you will hear the great drum ; and then be sure to get near to the *Quinconce*. You will hear our '*belle harmonie*.' "

" And then ? " asked Sir Frederick, much amused.

" Why, you will dine at two at your *table d'hôte* ; and after the *salut*, go, by all means, to the *Allée Verte* ; and at the Pont de Laeken you will take a *cruchon de bière de Louvain*, smoke a cigar, and see the young folks galloping their horses,—such a *brouhaha* ! You will amuse yourself well here on a Sunday, *allez*."

A dinner at two ! a tankard and pipe by way of recreation at four ! Sir Frederick laughed, and thought of a London Sunday, at the Zoological Gardens at seven, to stare at the monkeys, and invoke the air of the Regent's Park for an appetite for a nine o'clock dinner.

" You see, " said the good *Béguine*, as he continued to descend the hill, and again stopped under the balcony of the minister of the interior's hotel, at the corner of the Rue de la Montagne, " you see, mynheer, I am not a *béguéule*, not one of the over-rigid. My prescription is *amusez-vous bien*. In my quality of *garde-malade* I prescribe it ; for I know the efficacy of amusing the morbid. "

The word startled the patient for whom she was prescribing so pleasantly.

" Books, flowers, and fresh air, " she continued, " are excellent remedies, mynheer. You have a suffering air, poor gentleman ! but you are better than when I saw you at the shrine of St. Ursula at Bruges. I said to myself, '*Le malheureux !* where is his mother, his wife ? ' "

" In my country, " said Sir Frederick peevishly, and slightly colouring, " women usually do more harm than good in such cases. "

" Yes, " said the *Béguine*, nodding her coifed head, " I hate to see our good lady duchesses and baronesses, our saints of many quarterings, coming to perform their *charités de parade* in our hospitals, leaving their carriages at the gates, as if it were a theatre, and bringing the same vanity and feebleness to our wards that they show off in their boxes at the *spectacle*. They embarrass everything ; for they are full of ignorance and pretension ; and, above

all," she added, laying her hand on Sir Frederick's arm, "*elles manquent de ces habitudes qui viennent des idées. And now, goeden dag, mynheer!*"

She then scudded off, leaving her last words vibrating with a strange effect on the listener's ear. The sentiment was beyond her sphere, as the pure accent with which it was uttered was unlike her usual Flemish jargon. A thought, a doubt, a suspicion for a moment shot athwart his mind. He had never yet seen, except in passing and shadowed glimpses, the face of this good *Béguine*; for who does, that only meets them in the streets and public places? But her figure was cumbrous, her walk a waddle, her head stooped, and her step ponderous. Her exterior was that of a coarse middle-aged woman of the lower classes; whose natural strong good sense was clouded by the bigotry of her profession, but rendered characteristic by that tough, frank manner, so peculiar to the Flemish population. Still there was a *finesse* in some of the sentiments which dropped from her on this occasion, and an accent of peculiar sweet acuteness, which struck him forcibly; and the grotesque, good-natured *Béguine* was almost mingled with the poetical apparition of the imaginative and philosophical artist, Madame Marguerite. The possibility of such an identity opened a field for conjecture, and for the reveries of an imagination always ready to escape from fact to romance.

He was slowly ascending the *Montagne du Parc* as the fanciful idea of such a transformation was passing through his mind; and he found himself almost unintentionally obeying the orders of the *Béguine*, by adopting the first item of her programme for his day's amusement. The scene that presented itself in that mimic forest, which rises majestically in the midst of its surrounding palaces, is not to be equalled in any other capital. The principal promenade was crowded to excess by groups of both sexes; some richly, and all well dressed, moving up and down in many-coloured masses, through the long, densely shaded walk. Every face was brightened by smiles, every lip bursting with gaiety, and cordial recognitions, French or Flemish, the *bon jour* and the *goeden dag*.

Of those morose feelings with which the English *ennuyé* had left London, not one remained. Escaped from the scrutiny of that secret tribunal of *bon ton*, whose sneer is fate, whose ridicule is

death, he permitted himself to be amused under the dictates of his own gracious sensations. Not one English face, not a symptom of the tight, elegant, simply-dressed London man (that *genre à part* and unattainable model of European fashion,) came forth to 'shock his eye and grieve his heart.' He gave himself up to the popular torrent, composed of the *bourgeoisie* of the old and lower town. Physiological curiosities presented themselves on all sides, types of the originals immortalized in the conversation-pieces of Rombout and Du Châtel.* Here were the heads remarkable in the great picture by the latter master, of the states of Flanders and Brabant taking the oath of fidelity to the King of Spain in 1666. Here were also the Brussels imitations of *le badeau fashionable* of Paris, (for the word is now naturalized in the vocabulary of the French language.) The Flemish cockney, imprisoned in a tight coat, his neck inclosed in a cravat stiff as the iron *collier de force* imposed by Spanish tyranny on the revolting burghers of the olden times, was but the impersonation of vulgar pretension all over the world. Here and there was the fair, round, Brabançon face, complexions formed of both the roses; and that demure and primitive air, long retreated from *la Haute Ville*, but still to be found among the female youth of St. Géry and *la Place des Wallons*. On either side of the promenade were seated, on wooden chairs, the aristocracy of *la petite propriété*, who alone preserved their seats and sedateness after the great drum gave the alarm to the rest of the crowd, who all precipitated themselves towards the orchestra.

A *pièce d'ensemble* was performed by *la Société d'Harmonie* (a band of amateur artists of the town), with great precision. Sir Frederick Mottram had thrown himself on a bench at a short distance from the promenade, and in the midst of one of those delicious tufts of trees where a mutilated figure of a heathen deity spoke of the great national contention, where liberty had been so recently purchased with the free-will sacrifice of Belgian blood. When the music had ceased, he moved on under the shadow of the chestnuts

* Rombout of Antwerp, one of the Flemish masters most prized in Italy, where he resided some time at the Court of the Medicis. Francis Du Châtel became the pupil of Teniers, when he held his school at Brussels; but his conversation-pieces are of a more elevated character than that of his master.

and acacias which lead to that deep and umbrageous *bas fond*, where the fragments of a ruined fountain still disclose the following inscription :—

“ *Petrus Alexiowitz, Czar Moscoviæ, Magnus Dux, margini hujus fontis insidens, illius aquam nobilitavit, libato vino, horâ post meridiem tertiâ, die XVI Aprilis, anni 1717.* ”

But the time was gone by, when such loyal futilities, such mementoes of brute despotism, might have possessed a classical charm for the English partisan of divine-righted sovereigns. This base and servile reminiscence of the imperial centaur, half man, half beast, Peter the Great, the murderer of his son, the victim of his own fierce passions, served only to recall Siberia and the knout, on the spot where the Dutch soldiers had retreated from the victorious arms of an outraged people. Sir Frederick turned upon his steps.

The promenade now presented other groups, other physiognomies, another society. The burghers of St. G  ry and the *Place des Wallons* had retired to their antique homes, and were succeeded by a European crowd. Young, fresh English girls, with their friends, parents, or *chaperon*, and men of fashion of all nations, passing through Brussels, and resting from their itinerant labours on the seventh day, now filled the avenues of the Park. The Flemish faces and the Flemish joyousness were no longer observable. French and English were equally spoken, and the whole scene resembled a Sunday promenade in the Tuileries or in Kensington Gardens. It had lost, therefore, its charm for Sir Frederick ; and he was just escaping from the chance of a *rencontre* with some of his eternal countrymen, by the iron gates opposite to the *Chambre des D  put  s*, when he perceived Lords Montessor and Alfred, with Mr. St. Leger, walking down from the Rue Royale. He again plunged into the Park, and gliding under the thick shelter of the lime-trees, descended to his old hotel, where he found himself in actual want of that mid-day dinner which had so much amused him in the plans of the good *B  guine*.

He was annoyed, on his entrance, to find cards on his dressing-table inscribed by English names : and such names !—those of Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty ; Doctor de Burgo ; Mr. Thomas Tyler, son and daughter ; and one or two other insignificant obscurities, he never could have known. He called for Fegan ; but Fegan was

not to be found ; and he had taken the keys of his master's dressing and writing cases, and bed-room. His increasing carelessness, his constant absences, were not considered as redeemed even by that honesty and simplicity for which his master gave him credit ; for absurdity is frequently mistaken for ingenuousness, as misfortune is for merit. Sir Frederick desired Mrs. Van Doran to seek for him another servant : but Fegan had made himself friends in the establishment, and the good-natured hostess, while she accepted the commission, assured Sir Frederick that it was the way with them all, on their first arrival.

“ Brussels is so amusing, especially on a Sunday ; and Monsieur Fegan was such a *bon enfant* ! ”

In taking orders for a dinner *en particulier*, she observed, that there was a kermess at Terveuren, to which Fegan had probably gone ; but if *Milord* wished to go to the theatre, Potier performed in the *Centenaire*, and Mademoiselle Linsel in the *Fille de Dominique*. The bill of fare was tempting : but the fear of coming in contact with the Montessor party inclined him to forego the enjoyment of witnessing the performance of the first comedian in the world, because the most natural. Had he seen Mademoiselle Linsel in her charming part, he might have thought that sacrifice equally great.

He devoted his afternoon, then, to reading ; and by the time when he thought his English annoyances would be at dinner, he sallied forth, leaving it to chance to direct his steps to some of those beautiful environs, which, to use a term of Milton's, ‘ emparadise ’ the capital of the Low Countries.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ATELIER.

WHOEVER have visited Brussels *en grand seigneur*, lived exclusively with the diplomatic society, been billeted on the Belgian

noblesse, or accepted only the invitations of the English residents congregated in the upper town, may leave the ancient capital of the Low Countries, after a few days' or weeks' sojourn, as ignorant of the treasures it contains in arts and antiquities, as if they had never left their mansions in the parish of St. James's, or their hôtel in the Faubourg St. Honoré.

The old town, or *Basse Ville*, of Brussels, is a sort of moral, as well as mural, Pompeii, where habits, customs, and external forms of a long-past era are preserved in all the integrity of their first fresh existence. There, may still be found the sturdy spirit and firm nerve that resisted the splendid tyranny of the imperial Charles, the bloody persecutions of the bigot Philips, the numbing despotism and ill-judged innovations of the Austrian government, and that has finally, in the present day, sent back the House of Orange to its native region, to which the interests of European nations should induce them to confine it. It was the manufacturers and the artisans of the *Basse Ville*, that lent their masses to the impelling movement of reform and revolution, emanating from the intellectual energies of the nation; and showed that the spirit of old '*doyens de la nation*,' (who stood by their national rights, with '*Lyster van Brabant*' in their hands, and effected by their steady adherence to principle, more than the chivalrous valour of their Horns and their D'Egmonts had been able to achieve,) still preserved its intense though long-latent vigour.

During the week passed by Sir Frederick and Lady Frances Mottram in Brussels, they had lived principally in the society of the always gracious, courteous, and agreeable Prince of Orange, or of his court and its circle. Their mornings had been passed in the delightful *salons* of the venerable Prince D'Aremberg, admiring his fine collection of pictures, and listening to his amiable garrulity, of which the virtues and the sufferings of Marie Antoinette, the secret devotion of Mirabeau to her cause, and anecdotes of Voltaire's residence at Brussels, made the *fond*. They had accompanied the Prince of Orange to the races; and they had assisted at the evening circles of the Hôtels de Trazigny, de Ligne, or d'Ursel, or in other autocratic sets, where the old courtiers of the Austrian archducal times secretly compared the homeliness of the amiable Dutch Queen and her family, with the Spanish etiquettes and

German stateliness of the beloved *gouvernante* of their fathers.

To days and evenings so spent, the present existence of Sir Frederick Mottram formed a strange contrast. His object for the moment was, if not to preserve a perfect *incognito*, at least to avoid his English friends, and their surfeiting associations; and when his carriage should arrive, (which he now concluded might come by Antwerp,) to proceed as the chances and his actual *laissez-aller* state of mind might direct.

There was a spell hanging over him, which he feared to analyse: it was producing a new development of opinion. It was reviving all that had made youth delightful, and early manhood a dream: above all, it had removed him from the tyranny of fashion, in habits, in politics, in religion, and in the arts themselves. He felt within him a breadth of mind, an expansion of ideas, a boldness of inquiry, which he never before had time, independence or courage to indulge. The eyes of his *coterie* were removed from him; the watch-words of his party no longer resounded in his ears. He was scarcely less a Tory, and by no means more a Whig, than when he broke off from the sets and circles in which these epithets are consecrated; but he was already taking more European views; his mind was ascending from particulars to generals, and he was assigning to by-gone ages those by-gone terms and usages which are no longer applicable to the present, an epoch without an antecedent! His mind resembled a compressive spring set free; and he already admitted the maxim of Bacon—"first to watch, and then to speed."

Deep in thoughts, which had for their subject a change of views, that made him almost doubt of his own moral identity, Sir Frederick Mottram was descending from the Tirlemont towards that little-frequented part of the town which leads to the nucleus of its foundation, the Isle de St. Géry. The drums and trumpets of the *corps-de-garde* on the Place Royale, were announcing the sunset of a sultry and clouded evening, when he seated himself on one of those Gothic arches which are so frequently thrown over the windings of the Senne. The extremely picturesque antiquity of the place induced him to inquire from a sturdy-looking old gentleman, who was plodding along by the help of a gold-headed cane, and in a dress that might have figured in the reign of Maria Theresa, what was the name

of the irregular square which he then occupied. The old gentleman drew up in amazement, as if he thought it scarcely possible that any one could be ignorant of so important a site.

“ *Comment ! monsieur,*” he said ; “ you do not know the Isle de St. Géry and the Borgval ? *Sacrement !* ”

“ I am a stranger,” said Sir Frederick, taking off his hat ; for his informant, notwithstanding the abruptness of his manner, had lowered his to the ground.

“ *C’est ça,*” said the old gentleman. “ Well, monsieur, you are now on the site of the ancient citadel, where stood the chateau or first fortress of Brussels, occupied by the Emperor Otho the Second, in the tenth century. All that remains of that old bulwark is a ruin within that old brewery there, before you.”

“ An ancient site, indeed !” said Sir Frederick, perceiving he had fallen in with an original.

“ The Isle de St. Géry,” continued the former speaker, “ belonged to seven *seigneurs fonciers*, each of whom had a chateau on the shores of this little river. They were called the seven patrician families, and they have always distinguished themselves by their devotion to their country. You now stand, monsieur, in the heart of the old city : it was not till the thirteenth century that we began to move a little up the hill, when our good Duke John de Brabant raised a fine palace on the verge of the Forest of Soignes, now our park. Other palaces have since been built by our foreign masters, German, Spanish, and Dutch ; but here, on this spot, our own native sovereign, Duke John the Third, published the first constitutional laws known in Europe, which guaranteed personal liberty, and the secure exercise of the rights of property. You see, monsieur, we were always a little *en avant, nous autres Brabançons, n’est-ce pas ?* ”

“ It appears so,” said Sir Frederick, “ through the whole history of your country.”

“ Can I give you any further information ?” asked the bluff old gentleman.

“ If I might ask the way to the Grand Béguinage. ”

“ Ah, the good women ! I have just been inquiring for one of the order now. *Voyez, monsieur.* Give yourself the trouble, if you please, of crossing that little bridge, and go straight on ; but

lose no time if you intend to get there by their vespers. Any one will point out the way to the Grand Béguinage."

Sir Frederick bowed his thanks, and gladly resumed his hat, which a blast of wind, sweeping down the little river, made necessary. With his head full of Othos, Duke Johns, and the frank courtesy of his Brabançon informant, he proceeded along narrow streets flanked by high façades terminating *en escalier*. Lofty casements with little panes of Bohemian glass, massive doors fortified with square-headed nails, and the *rez-de-chaussée* protected by iron grates, added their features to the gloomy, silent, solitary quarter. The antiquated inhabitants were either not returned from their Sunday festivities in the environs, the kermesses of Anderlecht, or the merry-makings of Boisfort or *les Trois Fontaines*; or they were shut up in their family parties, where many generations assemble under the patriarchal roof, and from which strangers are always excluded.

As he proceeded, however, he had lost his clue, and scarcely knew how to go on, or how to return on his steps. Heavy drops of rain were beginning to fall, and sudden squalls of wind foretold a coming storm. The rain soon fell heavily; almost every door and casement was closed; and he had reached the neighbourhood of the lonely quarter of the Béguinage (a territory once without the walls of the town), when the increase of the shower obliged him to ask shelter from an aged woman, who sat within the threshold of an open door belonging to a large and gloomy edifice. From its appearance, the old ruin might have belonged to one of those patrician families, of which the antiquarian of St. Géry had spoken with such reverence.

The porteress, in her best Flemish French, welcomed him in, and offered him the stool on which she had been sitting, and reading her breviary. When he persisted, however, in declining the offer, and the rain continued to beat in with gusts of wind, she pressed him to enter *au parloir*. The desire to see the interior of the ancient edifice induced him to accept the invitation. The old woman hobbled on before him through a long narrow stone passage, which, turning to the right, opened into a dark, oak-wainscoted, low-roofed room. It could scarcely be said to be furnished. One or two antique carved, high-backed chairs, and an alcove (half skreened by a sombre serge curtain) containing a couch, with a few antique picture-frames

heaped up in a corner, a bust, and a torso, were its whole contents. One high window of many panes lighted the desolate apartment, and looked into a little grass-grown court. The old woman dusted a chair (which Sir Frederick accepted) and opened the door of an adjoining room, presenting to his observation an easel, on which was mounted an oil-painting of some dimension, with various implements of art. He rose and approached the *atelier*, for such it seemed.

“ *Entrez donc, monsieur,*” said the old woman; “ it may amuse you to look at that picture while the rain lasts. It is in a terrible state, this apartment! If I were mistress, it should be in another condition; the walls white-washed and the floors scoured, the furniture rubbed till it shone again, and the things set to rights: but,” she added, as she opened a glass-door that led into the court, “ I have not been allowed to touch anything.”

The opening of the door let in the perfume of the honeysuckles and jasmine which clustered round the walls of the court, and gave their dripping freshness to the close and heated room. A ray of light thus admitted showed the interior in negligent confusion, and fell upon the picture on the easel. It was a bold outline, thrown in with the first colours, of a site full of interest and groups full of movement; the small but countless heads were full of strong expression, like those of Callot in his picture of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. The time was night, and the picture represented the *façade* of that glorious Hôtel-de-Ville, every part of which is in itself a picture. In the balcony stood several figures in the imposing costume of the *Garde bourgeoise*. A conspicuous personage, in the centre of the group, was reading by torchlight from a paper,* with a look of intense anxiety, to an armed multitude beneath, which was shaded off by dense masses to the extremity of the Grande Place.

“ That was a frightful night !” said the old woman. “ There

* August 31, 1830.—On the return of the first deputation to the Prince of Orange, the deputies were so dissatisfied with the result, that they felt themselves called on to give an account of the transaction to the people. They accordingly distributed a proclamation through the town, narrating the circumstances:—“ Elle fut lue en outre aux flambeaux, au balcon de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, au milieu d'une multitude avide et inquiète.”—*Esquisses*, p. 74.

we were, monsieur ; old and young, women and children—we all took a part in that night.”

“ And here is your own portrait, my good dame,” said Sir Frederick : “ what an admirable likeness !”

“ *Je le crois bien,*” she said proudly ; “ I sat for it. And here is Madame herself, in the dress of a *Béguine*, you see. Ah ! monsieur, if you knew to what danger the good sisters exposed themselves during the Four Days ! — Are they good patriots, the *Béguines*? *—Well, just as Madame had got thus far with her picture, and finished the portrait of the Prince de Schaffenhause, she was called away from Brussels to undertake some great work in Germany ; and she has never visited Brussels but once since, when (the Virgin bless and protect her !) she settled a little fortune on me, with no other task but to live here, to air this apartment, and preserve everything just as she left it. ‘ Not a brush, Thérèse, *pas un coup de balai,*’ she said, the last night she closed the door of this room, and turned the key and gave it into my possession.”

In almost breathless accents Sir Frederick inquired, “ And what is your mistress’s name ?”

“ *Ah ! cela s’appelle* Madame Marguerite,” said the old woman ; “ a good creature, if there is one on earth, and a fine painter, if she had taken a better line, and had worked for the church as she has worked for her country. Look, sir” —and she turned out several unfinished pictures which lay against the wall, done only in two colours, and little more than studies — “ look, I beseech you : these are all taken from story-books about the Low Countries in the old times ; but not a crucifixion ! not a saint ! not a miracle ! not a martyrdom ! as our *cure* said the other day, when he was looking for something for an altar-piece for the chapel of a good brewer in the Low Town.”

Sir Frederick examined the various studies thus exposed to his inspection as long as he had light to see them by : there was obvious in all the same originality of conception, the same broad, bold, but unfinished touch. He assisted the old woman to replace them, and then asked, with affected carelessness—

* “ Le bel établissement du Grand Béguinage fut disposé pour recevoir et secourir les victimes des combats.” *Esquisses*, p. 74.

“ Have you lived long in the service of Madame Marguerite ? ”

“ Nearly eight years altogether. It has been a rather dreary life ; particularly when Madame went to Antwerp or to Ghent, to copy pictures, or take views of old buildings. This is a melancholy old place in the best of times. It belonged to the corporation of the *Poissonniers* ; you see there the remains of their fine painted glass windows, called *châssis*. But Madame liked it all the better for that : she wanted, also, a spacious work-room—not easy to get in this old quarter ; and then it is near the Grand Béguinage, where she has a little apartment.”

“ Oh ! Madame is a Béguine ? ”

“ *Hein !* a sort of a Béguine, if you will, a *dame chambrée*. She was once a sister, but when she took to painting pictures she recalled her vows. She has now again attached herself to the chapter, and when here submits, like a true charitable woman as she is, to all the duties of the order, and attends the hospitals : she visited all the *ambulances* during the Four Days.”*

Sir Frederick thrilled with the pleasurable interest he took in this relation. He feared that the rain would stop, or the evening fall too darkly, before he could devour all the details of this most melancholy, but, to him, most interesting apartment, where struggling penury and unavailing industry had worn out years of laborious diligence and unrequited talent. A little *guéridon* contained a plain delf *déjeûné*. A ponderous carved oak table loaded with

* The conduct of the women of Brussels during the Four Days was heroic : —“ Pendant la bataille,” says the author of the *Esquisses Historiques*, “ un grand nombre de propriétaires de maisons, aidés de leurs familles, arrachaient le plomb de leurs toits pour en faire des balles, et travaillaient sans relâche à confectionner des cartouches quand ils pouvaient se procurer de la poudre. Les femmes, les dames mêmes, se trouvaient avec courage et persévérance à ces occupations, si nouvelles pour elles. Dès le 28 septembre, un grand nombre de ces dames se réunirent en société, sous la présidence du général-en-chef, Van Halen, dans le but de secourir les blessés et leurs familles. Des collectes furent faites par leurs soins dans toutes les églises, et elles se partagèrent la tâche douloureuse de visiter chaque jour les *ambulances*, accompagnées d’un aide-de-camp. Le vin trouvé dans les caves des palais fut mis à leur disposition.”—*Supplément aux Esquisses Historiques de la Première Époque de la Révolution de la Belgique en 1830.*

drawings and books in various languages, a harp covered with green baize, and some music-scores, open on the desk of a little instrument which looked like an ancient spinette, were all objects of interest and curiosity.

“*Voyez, monsieur,*” said the old crone, pleased with the interest he exhibited; “here is the grey linen *blouse* in which she worked the night before she went off with the Prince.”

“Went off with the Prince!” reiterated Sir Frederick, with all the blood in his body rushing into his face.

“*Ah! je ne dis pas cela,*” said the old woman, frightened; “at least, I do not say it with any evil meaning. Madame is protected by the Princess, who has done some great charities by her hands to the poor *Béguines* of Brussels and to others; and I have orders to give this picture to the Princess whenever she comes or sends for it: it is the unfinished picture of the late Prince.”

She drew from behind the easel the portrait, which Sir Frederick brought out into the court, to view it by the last rays of sunset that lingered in the horizon.

It was the picture of an elderly man, who, to judge by the lineaments of his still handsome face, had passed through the world's hands, and shared largely in its pleasures. A voluptuous indolence, mingled with an aristocratical hauteur, was the leading expression. His dress was the white uniform of Austria; and his numerous orders were a proof of his rank and influence, if not of his prowess.

Sir Frederick replaced it with a deep sigh, and presenting the old woman a *napoléon*, observed, “that as the rain had now ceased, he would not further intrude then; but he begged permission to revisit the *atelier*, and to see by daylight what had appeared, even by that dim twilight, so indicative of a master talent.” Amazement at a donation so liberal, a recompense so far above the trouble she had taken, distended the eyes, and even silenced the tongue, of the garrulous old woman. Sir Frederick availed himself of her surprise, to escape the expression of her gratitude. He had scarcely however got a few paces, when, struck by a sudden thought, he turned back. The old woman was looking after him—

“I had heard,” he said, “that Madame Marguerite had arrived in Brussels: do you know where she resides?”

“ Oh ! you know her then, *mon bon seigneur* ? ” said the old woman, in trepidation.

“ Just enough, ” he replied, “ to entitle me to leave this card for her. You will not fail to give it ? ”

“ I shall not forget any command of yours, ” she said ; “ but Madame Marguerite is not arrived. She never fails to visit her *atelier* ; and yet I have heard nothing of her these three months. Her old friend Monsieur Janssens has just been here to inquire for her : I sent him to the *Béguinage là-bas* ! ”

“ Oh ! an old gentleman with a broad hat and gold-headed cane ? ”

“ *Ah ! mon Dieu, oui—un brave homme !* I think he wants to buy Madame’s great picture. ”

“ I should like to buy it myself, ” interrupted Sir Frederick, hastily ; “ I like it much, and the price would be no object. ”

“ *Bien, monsieur, bien !* ” said the old woman, her countenance brightening into an expression of pleasure that her inadvertent courtesy excused itself by the sale of a picture which had remained so long on the artist’s hands,—“ I will tell Madame. ”

The heart of one who has ‘ cleansed his bosom of that perilous stuff, ’ which has weighed upon his spirits, and long impeded the flow of every better and more genial feeling, is like a dismantled fortress, open to all inroads, accessible to all invaders. The heart, or that disposition of the feelings to which the term is vulgarly given,—the heart of Sir Frederick Mottram was precisely in this state, which most fitted it to receive a new impression from objects, that, under other excitements and associations, would have passed over its surface without leaving a trace behind.

It had however one guard, whose slumbers were easily awakened,—the habit of distrust, the grand arch on which the education of the wealthy youth of England is principally founded. The false institutes of British society, which make wealth and rank the primary points of parental speculation, which sink personal worth, throw the great and unpurchasable gifts of nature into contempt, and consider genius, intellect, grace, and beauty as matters of suspicion and avoidance, had placed the son of the plebeian Mottram as much within the go-cart of aristocratic prejudice, as if his veins had been filled with ‘ all the blood of all the Howards, ’ He had been guarded

by paternal maxims, and a mother's vigilance—by the precautionary saws of maiden cousins and widowed aunts (whom his father's niggardly liberality had raised from indigence to dependent sufficiency), against the allurements of youth, beauty, and talents, when unaccompanied by wealth, or unbacked by the world's consideration.

He had been taught to believe that the motherhood of Great Britain was in a conspiracy to entrap, and the unportioned daughterhood to seduce, him, and the first lesson of his own consequence and self-importance was impressed on his young and too ductile mind, by the insinuating accents of female ambition, breathed in the tender tones of affectionate and anxious caution.

But nature was powerful above all ! The artist's temperament, which he had derived from his Irish mother, had broken out, through the artificial associations of the over-educated, over-guarded *parvenu* ; and the beauty of form, the grace of movement, and the universal genius of a poor orphan, received as a talking companion to his sister, to discourse with her in French and German, had, in one short month, nearly overturned the system of years ; his after life had been the expiation of the imprudent impulse, as it had been the penalty of his heartless desertion of its object. Distrust of woman, the habit of considering her through her position in life, as a *means*, and never as an *object*, had clung to him, with that indissoluble adhesion which a mother's deep-sunk impressions are sure to create, and had survived other habits of mind of equal importance to his ambitious career. It had led to many an idle *liaison* with the flirting women of London sets, in which his senses took as little interest as his heart ; and it had precluded him from ever forming one of those deep and lasting attachments, only to be awakened by the sympathy of tastes and opinions, constituting that suitability which confounds two existences in one. He had been jealous of a wife whom he had never loved ; and he had believed himself in love with women, who had tried in vain to make him jealous.

The orthodox moralist, the pure and loyal church-and-state man, was a latitudinarian, where the passions, or vanity, which so often passes for passion, were concerned. He had written one of his best papers in the Quarterly Review, on the superior morals of England, while notoriously engaged in a *liaison* with the wife of his own

friend, the Marquis of Montessor; and had been succeeded in her Ladyship's good graces by his friend Lord Aubrey, in an interval devoted to writing an hypercritical article on some book of travels, in which the probity of Ninon de l'Enclos had been praised, at the expense of the trust-worthiness of a churchman. Foreign demoralization was a frequent theme in his conversation, and in his literary productions, when he dabbled, like other party notabilities, in reviews and newspapers. But the domestic gallantry of England, the libertinism of some of her highest aristocratic *coteries*, (comparable only to the society which flourished under Louis XV. and hurried on a revolution as inevitable as it was morally necessary,) had never yet come under the ban of his opinion.

To amuse, therefore, his idleness, to dissipate his disgusts, and cheer his spirits, by the indulgence of a *goût passager* for a woman who had thrown herself in his way, whose talents entertained, or person pleased him, would have been an incident in his journey; but would scarcely have weighed on the conscience of one who, among his own set and party, had obtained the name of the great moralist, because he paid his debts, and went, *sometimes*, to church on Sundays.

That '*l'oreille est le chemin du cœur*,' is a maxim in the code of gallantry, more especially applicable to that turn of life, when the wild energies of youth and passion are yielding to more sober and intellectual, but not less dangerous influences. The ear of Sir Frederick Mottram had been charmed by the music of sweet sounds, and his mind had been infinitely amused by the subjects on which those sounds had dilated, during his accidental rencontres with the fair Belgian artist. Her prepossession in his favour was romantic and flattering, as it was obvious. She had followed him from England (for he had no doubt that he had made his first impression at the bed of the parish workhouse), and she had crossed his path too frequently to attribute the circumstance to accident.

Though no longer *une jeune femme*, she was, according to the delicate French definition, *une femme encore jeune*: she was fresh, agile, handsome, spiritual, and amusing; he thought her, therefore, precisely the person whom a prudent, tasteful, and passionate man of prudence and pleasure might select for a *compagne de voyage*; whom he might induce, by a liberal allowance,

to travel as an artist at the same time to the same place with himself, and apparently with a view to the arts, and under the veil of great *bienséance*. Madame Marguerite was a companion such as the world (if it ever knew aught of the matter) might not wholly disapprove, a connexion which the slang of English fashion would call 'a fair thing and very decent,' and which no compunctious visitings of conscience would reprove : for the lady had come to years of discretion ; and he, though a married man, would only do what half the married men of his acquaintance were daily doing, or had done at some epoch of their lives—with this exception, that the object of *his* selection was neither the wife of his friend, nor the friend of his wife.

Such had been the summary of the reverie which had occupied his mind during his solitary moonlight drive from Alost to Brussels, and which, under new and still more agreeable impressions, had since preoccupied his thoughts ; for he had no doubt Madame Marguerite would again throw herself in his way. The chance, however, which had led him to her melancholy home, in the ruined edifice in the old *quartier de St. Géry*, had caused some revulsion in his feelings, and the frost-work fabric of his selfish intentions, cold and shining as it had been, fell to pieces. The desolate work-room of struggling genius, with all its sublime but melancholy imagery, the eight years spent there in profitless labour, by one whose talents threw the mediocrity of all the female society he had ever mingled with into the shade, had cast over the character and position of this singular woman a halo of respect, and awakened a reverential admiration for her qualities, and a pity for her dreary position, which altered the whole nature of the sentiment she had hitherto inspired.

Again, the fantastic creation thus raised was changed by an incident, a phrase ! The portrait of the Prince of Schaffenhause, and the *naïve* communication of the old portress, that the artist had gone off with the Prince, and was protected by the Princess, had roused the latent distrust awakened in his mind, while yet a boy at Harrow, by a caution against the wiles of his dame's artful niece ; and placed the charming artist, the hard-working woman of genius, in the light of an adroit adventuress, who had marked her quarry, and was eager in its pursuit.

Even the accounts of her patriotism and her piety, her exertions

during the Four Days, and her belonging to the order of the *Béguines*, served but to fill up the outline of his own views of her character ; as comprizing great energies, ready to devote themselves to any cause which excited her imagination or flattered her ambition ; and a love of intrigue, which the habits and licensed pursuits of that popular order might well serve and sanction.

The Princess's protection also recalled those odious intimacies that had shocked him in Vienna and in London, between the wife and the mistress—intimacies founded in mutual necessities and equal profligacy ; governed by the exigencies of their position, and maintained as the means by which they might aid, serve, and, in the end, betray each other.

The quondam mistress of the old profligate Prince of Schaffenhäusen, the *protégée* of the worst bad woman (if report spoke true) in the annals of modern high life, whose very name was to him a talisman of evil potency, was for the moment an object of suspicion, and even of fear ; and almost wound up his wavering resolves to leave Brussels, as soon as his carriage arrived, without seeking to follow up an acquaintance of such dubious character. In the meantime he would confine himself to poking about the antiquities of the place, with his casual and accomplished acquaintance Monsieur Van H., who had given him his address ; keep aloof from the upper town, and its English set ; get rid of Fegan, hire foreign servants, and then proceed to some pursuit of health, amusement and information, more accordant with his tastes, feelings and new-born determinations, political and domestic, and better suited to future years and new impressions.

Such was the wind-up of his self-examination, as he slowly, and by a not very direct road, ascended from the lower town. He had already reached the *Marché aux Herbes*, the barrier between the French and Flemish quarters, when he was struck by voices and words that startled him out of his deep abstraction ; and he paused to listen and to see.

A crowd of votarists at the shrine of pleasure were returning in various directions from the noisy *guinguettes* of the faubourgs. Some were singing their way back from the kermess at Etterbeek ; others, expending their exuberant vitality in loud halloos, joyous shouts, and tipsy laughter, on their return from their

recreations in the *estaminets* of La Porte Verte and Schaerbeek.

But loud above all the Flemish guttural expressions of rude but happy sensation, and the *refrains* of patriotic songs in which the Orange flag was trampled under foot, two voices were heard singing in unison. The words of the song were English, but they were intonated with an Irish emphasis not to be mistaken.

“ ’Tis on the curragh of Kildare,
Lord Edward will be there,
And the pikes all in repair,
Says the Shanvan vaugh! Hoo!”

The vociferous singers cleared the way for themselves, by the irregular movements of their Herculean forms. They were tall, athletic; and they rolled on, arm in arm, supporting each other like two tired horses, toiling up the hill, shoulder to shoulder. Sir Frederick, who drew back to let them pass, perceived that the riotous choristers and ‘ninety-eight’ men were Sir Ignatius Dogherty and his compatriot Lawrence Fegan, quite as drunk with Faro or Alambique, as they ever had been with true poteen or parliament whisky.

The revellers passed on, and Sir Frederick, a little surprised by the saturnalian association of the wealthy Irish baronet with his own servant, was still more amused than annoyed by the incident; for he had made up his mind to discharge the latter, and to cut the former. The frequent pauses which the two pot-valiant sons of Erin made in their ascent, again brought Sir Frederick so closely in contact with them on the *Montagne de la Cour*, that it came into his recollection that he might as well notify his presence to Fegan, who had carried off the key of his sleeping-room, and might, by protracting his vigils, prevent his master from that rest of which he already felt the want.

Fegan, with his usual quickness, drunk or sober (an instinct rather than a perception), stopped short, and endeavoured with his disengaged hand to remove his hat; but it fell to the ground. In endeavouring to recover it, he lost his equilibrium, and dragged the Baronet after him. Their fall produced a shout of laughter from the bystanders, some of whom had followed the drunken Irishmen

up the hill. The prostrate parties, enraged at the insult, and with the huffishness of drunkards, and the love of row of Irishmen, strove to make fight as they recovered their feet.

Sir Frederick, who saw all the possible annoyance which might arise to himself from his servant's getting into a scrape, now came forward to order Fegan home, and leave Sir Ignatius to his fate; but at the first sound of his voice, and advance of his person, he was recognised by the latter personage, who, with his besetting passions all afloat, gave vent, in the honesty of drunkenness, to his long-stifled feelings.

Seizing Sir Frederick by the collar, and clinging to him as much for support as to prevent his evasion, he roared out—"The divel a fut you 'll stir till you send me back my best shirt, though you were twenty times a greater dandy than you are."

The dexterity of Sir Frederick, joined with the indignation that led him to shake off the insolent drunkard, who, he imagined, had mistaken him for some other, were utterly unequal to relieve him from the grasp of one who had often floored a stouter man. He writhed and struggled in vain, and Sir Ignatius continued in tipsy emotion—"I 'll have my shirt! You won't stir till you tell me where I 'll get my best baby-linen-warehouse shirt!"

"*Ce sont des boxeurs Anglais,*" said one of the crowd, addressing the gaping circle of curious faces around him; while Fegan, sobered by apprehension and shame, stood aloof, wiping the mud from his face, which, in his fall, he had picked up from the still humid streets.

"*Soyez tranquilles,*" said the Belgian spokesman, "*vous allez voir un grand box. Allez donc, mon vieux brave!*" clapping Sir Ignatius on the shoulder.

"Get along out of that, you dirty spalpeen!" said Sir Ignatius, still holding the collar of Sir Frederick; "what is it to you? It's all I want is my shemie. Do you understand that—my shemie? I flather myself that's good Frinch. I want my shemie, monsieur."

"*Ah! c'est son camarade qui lui a volé sa chemise; faut dire un mot à la police,*" said the pertinacious interloper.

"The police!" exclaimed Sir Ignatius. "Is it an Irish nobleman and a barinite you'd be sinding to the police, you platter-faced omadaun?"

At that moment a carriage paused in its ascent up the hill, to avoid running over the still-gathering crowd; a lady put out her head, and a voice from one of three gentlemen who were descending the hill at the same moment, inquired in English, "What is the matter? Can we be of any service?"

"Och! the mather is plain and aisy, gentlemen dear," hiccupped Sir Ignatius. "I am Sir Ignatius Dogherty, a nobleman and an ancient barinite, as Sir William Betham, Ulster king-at-arms, will tell yez, if he plaizes: and this English gentleman, as he calls himself, borrowed my shirt at Ostend; and never heard more of it nor him from that blessed hour; to say nothing of my lady's white cambric pocket-hankercher."

Sir Frederick Mottram had now succeeded in disengaging his coat, but with a violence that almost flung him into the arms of the English gentleman who had come to the rescue.

"Mottram! by Jove," cried one of the strangers; an exclamation followed by a shout of recognition and amazement from the whole English party, in which the lady in the carriage joined with a frank hilarity such as fine ladies seldom indulge in. The gentlemen were Lords Montessor and Alfred, and Mr. St. Leger; the lady was the Princess of Schaffenhhausen, who, in spite of the darkness and a deep veil, was instantly recognised.

"But what is it?" asked the Princess in her broken but sweet accent: "*faites-vous donc une petite contre-révolution à l'eau rose?*"

"No," said Lord Alfred; "it is, I suspect, *à la bière de Louvain.*"

"And English influence," said the Princess, "seems more or less at the bottom of this, as of other movements."

"I leave my friend, here," said Lord Montessor, "whom we have found in the thick of the row, to answer for himself. Sir Frederick Mottram, Madame la Princesse de Schaffenhhausen." And he pushed Sir Frederick, whom he held by the arm as tightly as Sir Ignatius had held his coat, towards the door of the britzka.

Sir Frederick's first impulse at this strange, unlooked-for, and most unlucky rencontre with nearly all the persons he was most desirous to avoid, had been to make his escape: his next was to stand firm, and trust to the fact that Sir Ignatius Dogherty had,

in his drunkenness, mistaken him for another person : he had as much forgotten that there had been a moment in which he was in want of a shirt, as he was ignorant, through the silence of Fegan on that particular, that he had availed himself of the flower of Sir Ignatius's wardrobe. This dense twilight introduction to the Princess, in the narrowest and most dusky part of the *Montagne de la Cour*, divested it of much of the awkwardness and confusion he could neither repress nor conceal, but which he felt in every nerve and fibre.

"Lady Frances is here, I suppose?" said the Princess, "though she never mentioned her journey when I saw her the night before I left London."

The cool effrontery of this reminiscence astounded Sir Frederick.

"No," said Lord Montessor; "we husbands are only the *avant-garde*. Lady Frances joins you here, I suppose, Mottram?"

Mottram answered 'unwittingly—he knew not what.'

"When did you arrive, messieurs?" asked the Princess; "and where are you going?"

"Here, St. Leger, come forward," said Lord Alfred: "he will tell you; he is the sense-keeper of our party."

"Monsieur St. Leger did always like what you call the *sinécure*," said the Princess.

"My present part is anything but that," he said; "there is no charge so difficult as the taking care of a man who is running after his heart without the hope of his recovery." (And he clapped Lord Alfred on the shoulder.) "But, be that as it may, we arrived yesterday at dinner, and have searched every hotel in the town for the *Princesse Fée*."

"And now you have found me, *à quoi bon*?"

"That is not a question to be answered here," said Lord Alfred, laying his hand on the door of the carriage: "Whence are you come?"

"From my *campagne*."

"And where are you in Brussels?"

"The Hôtel de Gronendael is my *état-major*."

"That suffices. We shall not so easily lose sight of you again. Your disappearance in London caused a sensation, as the 'Age' said, unrivalled since——"

“ —Since the death of Lady Frances’s parroquet,” interrupted the Princess.

There was an affected laugh and a short silence among the party.

“ Are you going to the theatre, Princess ?” asked Lord Montessor ; “ and will you let us into your box ?”

“ *Misericordia*—I go to a play on a Sunday ! What do you English take me for ?”

“ Will you allow me then,” said Lord Alfred, “ to join your head-quarters, and enter immediately on service ?”

“ *Nous verrons*,” said the Princess, yawning. “ *Bon soir, messieurs*.” And then, addressing her servants, she pronounced the imperative “ *Allez*.”

The carriage drove on. Meantime the *dramatis personæ* had shifted their position. A something uttered in the ear of Sir Ignatius by Fegan, had produced the same effect as the muttered magic of the celebrated Irish whisperer, who tamed horses by a word. Sir Ignatius shrunk off, supported by the arm of his companion ; and the crowd, disappointed in their hope of witnessing an English boxing-match, dispersed and disappeared. The gentlemen proceeded down the *Montagne de la Cour*, on their way to the theatre ; and, either from malicious design or inadvertence, drew Sir Frederick along with them, who, pinioned on either side by Lord Montessor and his brother, meditated the escape he had as yet not been able to effect without exciting some strange suspicion.

“ Whom had the Princess with her ?” asked Lord Alfred.

“ Her eternal *dame de compagnie*, I suppose,” said Mr. St. Leger.

“ Her German etiquette thinks a lady in waiting an indispensable appendage. I could tell you stories of that arrangement at Vienna *à mourir de rire*.”

“ You shall tell them over an Ostend oyster and iced champagne, after the theatre to-night,” said Lord Montessor. “ Mottram, you must sup with us at the Bellevue.”

“ Not to-night : I have written myself into the most confounded head-ache, and must home to bed.”

“ Not a bit of it,” said Lord Montessor, still detaining him by the arm ; and he suddenly stopped at the corner of the *Place de la Monnaie*, which now burst upon them in all its bustle and brilliancy.

“ You must come with us to our ambassador’s box. We have a million of things to say, and to ask. Have you seen the English papers? What do you think of the glorious stand made by the two Dukes, and Lords Winchelsea and Eldon, the other night?”

“ I have seen no papers, and want to know nothing of English politics. I have left London for the express purpose of throwing over the whole concern and breaking free for a time.”

“ Oh! so. I suppose you know that all sorts of reasons have been assigned for your escapade, gallant, political, economical and salutary?”

“ Provided you don’t repeat them, it is quite indifferent to me what hirelings have written, or gossips of either sex invented in malice, or repeated in design.”

“ Design! what design?” asked Lord Alfred: “ I don’t see how your movements can affect any one.”

“ Except his wife,” said Lord Montessor, laughing. “ She really was in despair at your sudden and unannounced departure, until your letter to your man of business cleared up the mystery. But we cannot stand talking family business here. Do come and see *la petite Linsel—c’est à croquer, celle-là.*”

“ Impossible, I am not dressed.”

“ Psha! nobody dresses here. The *braves Belges* of the present day have not got as far as the *toilette habillée*, except for a court ball. By Jove! how gay and splendid this place is! quite a little Palais Royal. This is the proper *entourage* for a theatre. Our English theatres are buried in such horrid purlieus.”

At that moment, the French and English secretaries of legation drew up in their cabs. They were known to all the parties, and the mutual recognitions under the peristyle permitted Sir Frederick to escape. His mood of mind had been wholly broken up by the unwished-for rencontre, connected as it was with associations it had cost him so much pain and trouble to get rid of.

He was in the act of crossing the illuminated *Place* with eager haste, when he came full against a gentleman, whom, while he was making his apology, he recognised to be his agreeable travelling companion from Ghent to Alost.

“ You are surely not turning your back upon the ‘*Centenaire*’ and ‘*La Fille de Dominique*?’ ” said M. Van H.

“ I have been forcibly brought here, ” said Sir Frederick ; “ and have just shaken off some free-hearted companions, who wanted me, *bon gré mal gré*, to bring my aching head into the heated atmosphere of the theatre. Besides, ” he added, already relieved by the absence of his tormentors, “ I doubt that there is anything within, finer than this splendid scene without. ”

“ Yes ! whoever would give the stranger a favourable impression of the gaiety of Brussels, should drop him first here, at this hour, where we stand, in the centre of *la Place de la Monnaie*. On either side are the most modern and the most ancient public monuments—the theatre and the *Hôtel de la Monnaie* : the one, with its cold Greek architecture, its peristyle of Ionic columns, and illuminated arcades, was finished in 1819; the other, with its heavy masses now lying in their own deep shadows, was founded in 1291. Ages have passed over its venerable site; great scenes have been enacted where it stands; dynasties have been overthrown, and governments displaced; but no event, in the course of the five hundred years which have passed since its foundation, has been more extraordinary, or more influential on Belgian interests, than that which it witnessed on the night of the 25th of August 1830. Here began our revolution, on such a night as this—at this hour—in this month—and amidst such images of brilliancy and pleasure as now present themselves, with the music of Auber ringing in every ear, and the representation of a popular revolution heating every imagination ! ”

“ Yes, ” said Sir Frederick, “ you recall to my recollection that the outbreak of the disturbances at Brussels did commence at the theatre; and that the mimic representation of a rebellion of Lazzaroni was the first link in the important chain of events, which may yet kindle another general and European war, if not prevented by the wisdom and firmness of the greater powers. Had the *Muette de Portici*, then, not been performed, William of Nassau might still have reigned in Brussels, and Leopold been living an accomplished private gentleman at Claremont. ”

“ That, ” said M. Van H., “ is a very rapid, and, permit me to add, a very English conclusion. Accidents, sir, may beget accidents; but events which make the destinies of nations are never *improvisés*. ”

Sir Frederick Mottram felt that his already irritated temper was

committing him on a point of courtesy, as well as of fact; and checking his own impetuosity, he said—

“The truth is, your Belgian revolution is not popular in England, or rather, not well known, and least of all with that large and influential party who are endeavouring to uphold a constitution, threatened not only by internal impatience of necessary evils, but by external influence and example; and when one hears of a dynasty overthrown under the excitement of a dramatic representation, and finds that event misrepresented as a great movement of a great people, and offered as a proof of the march of social improvement, a theme of popular rejoicing, and a type for popular imitation”

“When that theatre was first opened in 1819,” interrupted M. Van H., “the representation, chosen as the most national and exciting, was the *Caravane du Caire*, the *chef-d’œuvre* of our own immortal *Grétry* (for whose heart, bequeathed to his native city of Liège, two nations went to law); the musical susceptibility of the Belgians, second only to that of Italians, was roused to a frenzy of delight; but no one thought of going to Cairo, or journeying in a caravan. If the example of Massaniello had more influence on the population of Brussels, than it had on the *habitués* of the Opera-house in the Haymarket, it was because it fell like the spark on a well-prepared mine—because the explosive elements were already accumulated by an unjust and anti-national government. The accidental influence was confined to the square in which we are now conversing, but the shock vibrated to the remotest corner of Belgium. But pray give yourself up for awhile to Belgian ideas and to Belgian influences. Let us take a *sorbet* under this veranda; you will find it more refreshing than the interior of the theatre; and in witnessing the manners of our citizens in this their favourite haunt, you will be better qualified to judge of the great event which took place on it.”

The next moment the stranger-friends were seated under an awning in the front of one of the brilliant coffee-houses which occupy the *Place de la Monnaie*. Ices and *punch à la Romaine* were set before them, and the whole structure of mind and feeling which had been generated by the *mal-à-propos* appearance of Sir Frederick’s English coterie gave way before an intense and awakened curiosity.

“It is not to be expected,” said Monsieur Van H., “that foreigners should be acquainted with the long details of grievance that prepared the way for our revolution ; but from the universality of the effect, you must be prepared to infer the existence of an universal cause. Without, however, pausing upon historical considerations, the event, as far as this *locale* is concerned, you may well imagine, was one singularly picturesque. It has afforded a fine subject to the pencil of one of our most distinguished female artists, Madame Marguerite ; for notwithstanding the imputed dulness and homespun materiality of our Belgian women, we have some fine painters and even agreeable writers among them.”

“Is that picture of Madame Marguerite’s in the market ?” asked Sir Frederick.

“It was sold to a manufacturer of this city, before it was finished. In fact, it never has been finished. Madame Marguerite left Brussels a few weeks after the Four Days, and has never since been heard of here, till the other day, when a report had been spread of her intention of contributing a picture to our exhibition.”

“But,” said Sir Frederick, “the public mind having been so fearfully excited by the Parisian revolution of July, there surely was great want of foresight in the Government allowing the performance of the *Muette*.”

“So the event has proved,” said Monsieur Van H. : “and indeed had the thing been contrived on purpose by a band of conspirators, it could not have been more *à-propos*. Indeed there are not wanting persons to assert that the whole was a plot of the Government, to excite a scene, which might serve as a pretext for future severities. But the total absence of all repressive means, to confine the possible outrage within safe limits, is the best defence of the authorities.”

“True,” said Sir Frederick ; “such suppositions of ultra Machiavelian refinements on the part of governments, are seldom well founded, though frequently employed, in the speculations of journalists. They are common enough in English politics, and have been made in instances, in which I have had the best reasons for knowing their slanderous falsity.”

“In the present case,” said M. Van H., “I totally discredit them, and believe that it had been in contemplation to prevent the exhibition. Considering the state of the public mind, more especially

at that particular moment, the folly of administering such a stimulus to the inflamed populace, was worthy of a Government predestined to destruction."

"What," said Sir Frederick, "was the circumstance to which you more immediately allude?"

"The public discontents had been for some time gathering head, and the aspect of affairs was becoming daily more threatening. The Government was alarmed; but to conjure the coming storm, no better expedient suggested itself than an ostentatious rejoicing on occasion of the King's birthday, which fell on the twenty-fourth, precisely the day before that on which the revolution actually commenced. For this festivity the greatest preparations had been made by the Government. Fireworks were to be given at the *Porte de Namur*, with public illuminations in the Park and city; concerts, races, and exhibitions of every sort, calculated to intoxicate an unreflecting populace. An immense sum was expended on the Park alone to render it a centre of especial attraction. With an unpopular Government such a rejoicing by command would have been sufficiently galling; but it was rendered doubly disgusting, by the circumstance that the poverty of the exchequer had been made the plea for continuing an odious impost upon the grinding of corn, which fell especially heavy on the common people. The outcry was immense, and on every side was heard the epigram of '*to-day an illumination, to-morrow a revolution!*' The expense, however, had been incurred, the preparations were made, but the authorities were discouraged; and amidst the most glorious weather they put off the celebration *sine die, à cause du mauvais temps!* In point of fact, the military and civil authorities, and the public itself, were, for more than eight days, aware that some great event was at hand; yet the drama of the *Muette* was allowed to be played!"

"The conjuncture was strange," said Sir Frederick: "and what followed?"

"The house was crowded at an early hour, and every allusion to liberty was received with an enthusiasm which was rapidly propagated to an assembled multitude collected in this square.

"Warned by a sort of instinct, that the moment for action was come, the citizens flocked to the environs of the theatre in numbers unusually great. Other physiognomies and other dresses than are

usually seen here, presented themselves. The *blouse* and the *casquette* were frequent; but there were no rags, none of the squalid poverty, which looks to public disturbances for the opportunity for plunder. Neither were there any ostentatiously armed. Surrounding the theatre, and spread in the *Café Suisse*, and the *Mille Colonnes*, they awaited events; but no one drank: '*Je ne bois plus, il est dix heures, venez donc, on nous attendra,*' was repeated on every side."

"And the authorities permitted all this, and did not take the alarm?"

"No force of any sort appeared to protect the peace. Towards the end of the play, the crowd began to move towards the *Fossé-aux-Loups*, where was the printing-office of 'the *National*,' a most anti-national and Dutch newspaper, an object of general execration and hatred.

"At ten o'clock two lamps were broken, which was the first signal for riot. In an instant, the street was unpaved, amidst cries of *à bas le forçat libéré!* the editor Libry. The shop of this man, in *Rue de Magdelaine*, was attacked, and a scene of devastation commenced, which lasted for more than thirty hours."

"And the authorities? the magistrates?"

"At eleven o'clock, the *Procureur du Roi* was quietly in bed; and when roused by his deputy, he went to the scene of action, accompanied only by four individuals, who soon deserted him: it was already too late. The military and civil authorities had assembled at the Governor's, and to them the *Procureur* repaired, but found his apprehensions treated with contempt and mockery; and when word was brought that the magnificent hotel of Van Maanen, the unpopular Minister of Justice, was attacked, the informant was told, '*It is false, you are an alarmist, if not something worse.*'"

"At two o'clock, after having supped, the magistrates separated, and went home to bed. Van Maanen's hotel, which, strange to say, occupied the site of the palace of the atrocious Duke d'Alva, in the *Petit Sablon*, was attacked by a party utterly independent of the other rioters, and was promptly given to the flames. Nothing was stolen, not even to the amount of an *écu*; but nothing was spared.

"The troops, left without a superior authority to direct their movements, paraded the town in small bodies, without effecting

any salutary purpose. About sixty chasseurs arrived towards three o'clock on the spot, where the people were tranquilly enjoying the spectacle of the fire at Van Maanen's. An individual ill-dressed, with a dirty feather in his hat, and armed with a sabre and pistols, who was in advance of the crowd, cried out to the officer in command, '*Bas les armes, ou vous êtes tous morts.*' The sombre and concentrated people turned their eyes from the flames, and beheld the troops advancing round the corner of the Rue Bodenbroek. To the demand of *bas les armes*, the lieutenant replied by announcing his orders to disperse the crowd, and the necessity he should be under of firing, if they did not depart. But the individual, who acted on behalf of the people, and who was recognised as an old serjeant of the first division, pushing back the officer, said, 'You have nothing to do with this; go about your business. *Mais quant à nous, Monsieur Damman, nous ne quitterons que quand cet hôtel* sera brûlé jusqu'aux fondemens.*' "

"Well, sir?" said Sir Frederick, much interested.

"The people kept their word. This little anecdote gives a fair estimate of the extent to which the authorities were unprepared to meet an event which they could not but have foreseen; and of the manner in which the people found leisure to become acquainted with their own strength. Some resistance was indeed made, and blood spilt in other quarters of the town; but it cannot be said that any well-directed effort was made to check the progress of anarchy, and prevent the utter destruction of the city, (had such been the good pleasure of the populace,) till the *garde bourgeoise* spontaneously formed, to protect their own property, and maintain order."

"This is a graphic sketch you have given," said Sir Frederick, "of the outbreak of your Revolution. It must have supplied your artists with many stirring subjects."

"Few, however, have as yet occupied themselves upon it, though the History of the Low Countries is a favourite source with our historical painters. There is a magnificent picture of Dutch heroism, *le Bourgmestre de Leyde*, by Monsieur Wappers, at the King's palace. But the first painter probably of the day, the Paul Potter

* So pronounced by the lower classes of Brussels.

of the nineteenth century, Verboeckhoven, confines himself strictly to safer subjects, and paints chiefly cattle pieces."

"I should be glad to visit the work-rooms of some of your modern school."

"And in my national vanity, I shall be happy to accompany you, if you will appoint your day and hour."

"I shall be delighted, as soon as I can make up my mind whether I shall remain in Brussels, or push on for some of the German Spas, to return for your great Anniversary."

At that moment, the carriages of the French and English Ambassadors drew up in front of the theatre; and the fear of being again caught by the English travellers, induced Sir Frederick to retire to his quiet *gîte* at the Tirlemont. M. Van H. accompanied him to its gates. It was not yet eleven; but the city of Brussels was already sinking into quietude and repose. In that one day, how many incidents, how many novel impressions, had occupied and amused the awakened mind of the English *désœuvré*!

Fegan, sobered but stupified, was waiting in the *porte-cochère*, to light his master to his room, and was beginning an apology, when he was dismissed at the bed-chamber door: but, long after it had been closed, his Irish moan and broken exclamations might have been heard on the corridor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JANSSENS.

A BRILLIANT morning was ushered in by a packet of letters, brought from the post by Fegan, who was more than usually alert and attentive. They were letters of business, of politics, and of friendship. There was one, also, from Lady Frances, inclosed in that of Mr. Harris, his agent. It was reproachful, expostulatory, self-willed; and it mentioned her having definitively arranged to

follow her husband, as soon as it suited the convenience of some friends, with whom it would be prudent, she said, and proper to travel.

There ran through the whole epistle such a mixture of art and heartlessness, such an obvious wish to keep to the letter of duty, in the absence of all sense of its spirit, such a substitution of decent forms for real anxiety, either for the recovery of his health, or for maintaining a place in his affections, that it awakened all his latent aversion to the writer. Still, seeing as he did through her ill-concealed purpose of throwing an air of propriety over an inconsiderate indulgence of her own fancies, while she fixed upon him the odium of negligence and indifference, the letter itself did not displease him. One word of true feeling, one sentence of lurking tenderness, or of mortified affection, would have left him utterly defenceless. But there was nothing of this; and the perusal of the crafty phrases, dictated in possibility by some member of the Arlington-street coterie, and read to them all 'in council assembled,' was in its result as unfavourable to the writer, as it was most favourable to her husband's own desire to escape her rencontre.

The physical improvement impressed on Sir Frederick Mottram's health and temperament by change of air, climate, circumstance, and scene, the new development given to native powers of thought by his new views and ideas, and above all, a delicious but doubtful consciousness that there were sources of sensibility within his heart, not absolutely dried up by the arid pursuits of his late circumscribed position, had given to his new life a relish to which he had long been a stranger. He determined, therefore, to pursue its pleasant casualties till their novelty should wear out, or their sources become exhausted in the enjoyment; and he made up his mind to write to Lady Frances, forbidding her to pursue her projected journey to Brussels, to announce his own return to Mottram Hall for the shooting-season, and to request that she would fix her own residence, in the mean time, at the villa of her father, the Duke of —, at Richmond. For a moment, a doubt had crossed him that her proposition being a mere pretext, she might, to prevent his interference with her views, have already left England, and by the same packet which brought out her letter. On reflec-

tion, however, he thought it right to despatch his answer, and thus seal the hollow compact of mutual deception, the only tie that now existed between them.

It was not till he had fulfilled this intention, that he visited his English friends at the Bellevue, from whom he might expect information more precise concerning the movements of the travelling *brigata*; and on reaching the hotel, he found that they had already ridden out with a party to visit the race-course of Mont Plaisir; whence they were not expected till seven in the evening, the hour when they had ordered dinner.

As all hope of continuing his stealthy and incognito habits was for the present over, he secured handsome apartments at the Hôtel de Flandre, wrote his name at the English and French embassies, presented his letter of credit to his banker, Monsieur Engler, received and accepted an invitation to dine at that gentleman's splendid and hospitable mansion, left cards on his accomplished acquaintance the Polish colonel, and for the courteous M. Van H.; and surrendered himself to the chances for the few successive days, even though the Princess of Schaffenhauseu should continue in Brussels, and his introduction to his '*Donna odiosa*' bring with it the certainty of a meeting.

The latter, indeed, was a contingency to which less bitterness was now attached than he had hitherto experienced on the subject. The removal of his wife from the sphere of the Princess's unhallowed influence, had divested his feelings to her Highness of their sting. He disliked, it is true, her manners, and he despised her imputed immorality; but how many of his daily associates, in public and in private life, stood precisely in the same category!

The only occasion on which he had particularly noticed her voice in England was, when her insolent and aristocratic sarcasms on his own birth and character had reached his ear, in the box of the Opera: it had then jarred on his organ like a sharp, wiry, untunable instrument. Was his hearing at that time, like all his other sensations, morbid?—or was the rich and sweet accent in which she had lisped her Parisian French from her britzka, on the preceding evening, another of her affectations? Sir Frederick was a voice-fancier; and that of the Princess, on the latter occasion, was so completely of the *timbre* that accorded with his auditory idealism, that it seemed to

be familiar to his imagination, as if he had heard such music in his dreams; and the physical sensation was not without its moral effect.

The Princess, too, was now associated in his mind with her *protégée*, the artist. It was true, he had forsworn Madame Marguerite, cast her from his mind; yet he found himself, at the moment when the English fashionables were thronging to the promenade in the park, descending to the old town, and taking the direction to St. Géry. He stopped for a moment on his way, opposite the old house which had sheltered him on the preceding evening: it appeared to him in the bright daylight still more desolate and dilapidated than on the night before. Its one window, of many panes, was closed with a shutter; so was the Gothic casement in its stepped gable.

The narrow and nailed door was shut, but he could not resist pulling the bell. No one answered, though the summons was thrice repeated; and he proceeded to the ancient head-quarters of the Béguines to inquire for La Sœur Greite.

The Grand Béguinage of Brussels presented a very different appearance from that of Ghent. Its cloistral and narrow streets, twelve in number, were dreary and lonely, as if swept by a plague. The blast of opinion had passed over the institute in Brussels, which no longer belonged to the age. Here and there, however, a flower-pot at an open casement, or a birdcage at a door, with a lean and withered sister sitting beneath a *trellised* shed, in front of her cell-like dwelling, indicated that a few lingering votarists of *Notre Dame de la Vigne* still found shelter in the consecrated purlieus of the great church of St. Beghé: but there were none of the boudoir-like dwellings such as are occupied by the rich *semi-dévotés* at Ghent.

The habitation of this order at Brussels was a record of the changes of opinion and of the struggle of prejudices, religious and political, by which the capital of the Low Countries had for centuries been agitated. At a period when the influence of women began to assume the intensity of a religious worship, when the St. Beghés, the Ursulas, and the Gudules (who preceded the great stateswomen of the middle ages, the Marguerites and the Jeannes) made their appearance on the European stage, the Béguinage was founded. This event occurred in 1250, and, in 1254, Hugh, the apostolic prelate of Brabant, endowed the order with high privileges; and, as its rules

were the least rigorous of all monastic codes, the number of the sisterhood rapidly mounted to a thousand.

In 1585, when the reforming spirit of the sixteenth century gave a shock to the stronghold of human error, which loosened some of its minor absurdities while it left the graver prejudices unmoved, the movement penetrated even into the close and pleasant quarters of the Béguinage, and the ancient monastery and church were nearly demolished by a Calvinistical magistrate of Brussels. The sisterhood was dispersed, the shrines were overthrown, and the ruins of their once sumptuous cloisters were overgrown by the rank herbage of the neglected soil. But there is a pertinacity in error which truth rarely possesses, and in 1657 the church of St. Beghé again rose with additional splendour; the cells were re-opened and filled, and the sauntering sisters were again gliding along the streets of the city. The pious gallantry of the citizens was pleased to expend upon this restoration no less a sum than 351,518 florins.

Then came the grand European movement announced by the French revolution, and in 1796 the monastic orders were all suppressed throughout Belgium; but even then those true women, the Béguines, obtained, through that perseverance which is the omnipotence of their sex, a restoration to their ancient and venerated haunt; and a few of the order still linger on the spot to this day.

Sir Frederick Mottram stood for a moment in the midst of the moral and material decay, and was preparing to turn down one of the little alleys which radiate from the grass-grown space surrounding the church, for the purpose of inquiring from one of the sisters, who sat knitting in the sun, for the lodging of the Sœur Greite, when the unwonted sound of a carriage rattling over the pavement drew off his attention. The carriage rolled up to the portals of the church, a Béguine hobbled out, made an inclination of the head to the persons she was leaving, and remained standing on the steps of the church till the carriage moved out of sight. Before she had passed the skreen of the door, Sir Frederick recognised his old friend, and followed her into the edifice.

“ Well, ” she said, with her usual Flemish frankness, “ I told the Princess it was you, though Madame Marguerite insisted that you have an air *plus guindé* than that of the person who passed the

carriage with so quick and light a step, like one who was hurrying after somebody or something."

"She was quite right," he replied, smiling; "I was looking for you."

"*Tant mieux*," said the Béguine. "When a fine man of the world looks out in such a dreary place as this for a poor old sister of charity, it is a good sign. I thought you would come to see me, or at least to visit the Béguinage, as you promised; so returning from the Puterie, where *Madame la Princesse* was to see the Vandyke with Madame Marguerite, her Highness took me up and brought me here. She has given me this money to distribute among the poor of the quarter of the Béguinage, in spite of the remonstrance of Madame Marguerite, who pretends, that money so given only multiplies the poverty it affects to relieve. *C'est un esprit fort, que cette Madame Marguerite*. For my part, I am but a simple christian, a good Béguine, and I understand nothing of the matter; all I know is, that the pious women of old had always '*leurs pauvres*.'"

"I believe Madame Marguerite is right in principle, whatever she may be as to feeling. But I like the pity which gives, ere charity begins; and I beg of you to accept this trifle for the same purposes as the sum given you by the Princess."

"*Hein!*" said the Béguine, dropping the sovereign she had received into the Princess's purse, which she held between her finger and thumb.

"Tell me, *ma mère*," said Sir Frederick, smiling at the avidity with which she seized the money, "does Madame Marguerite accompany the Princess?"

"Yes, she is going to touch up some old pictures at the castle of Schaffhausen. She has a fine time of it, that Madame Marguerite, since the Prince sat for his picture to her; till then she had scarcely bread to eat; but since the Prince's death, she and the Princess are inseparable; she accompanied her to England, and some say she is a poor relation. Everybody may have poor relations, *n'est-ce pas, Monsieur?*"

Sir Frederick nodded assent, and sighed.

"They are both *semi-dévotés*," continued the old woman: "the Princess is attached to *les dames nobles du Petit Béguin-*

nage de Gand; and Madame Marguerite is a sort of Béguine too; but *hélas!* we are no longer rigorous."

"And what is the nature of the *Petit Béguinage* of Ghent?"

"It was founded by a great and pious lady, Marguerite, the sister of the Countess Jane of Flanders. It is a little aristocracy, where the *noblesse* and *haute bourgeoisie* repose from the fatigues of a stormy life, and the disappointments of the heart. I have no great faith in the piety of such persons."

"Nor have I," said Sir Frederick, emphatically; "and I dare say your two ladies find their account in——"

He paused in the feeling that he was committing an impropriety; and he was pleased to see himself relieved from the necessity of finishing his sentence, by the Béguine's devotion, who was now kneeling before the statue of St. Beghé, a woman who, at the end of a thousand years, was still exerting a certain influence on society, receiving its homage, and perhaps furnishing a veil to cover its follies and its vices.

Sir Frederick made the observation mentally, with the shuddering conviction of the power of a sex of which, like others of his class, he held a contemptuous opinion. He expressed aloud, however, only the eulogistical part of his reverie to the Béguine.

"*Ah! mon Dieu, oui,*" she replied; "our holy church owes everything to the pious Christian women of the better times! But all that is over: religion banished from earth is returned to heaven, whence it came! Look, Monsieur," and she pointed to a dirty crazy image of the Virgin, "look at that sign of the times. Look at that old tissue silk petticoat! You see by the fashion that it is as old as Maria Theresa's time. Would those artificial flowers be thus faded and covered with dust, if there was any piety upon earth? They say that Belgium is falling into the hands of the priests; but what does it signify, that our priests influence the elections, if they return only *esprits forts*, who do not so much as offer a taper at the shrine of a saint, and who leave the blessed Virgin without a rag to cover her. I distrust those priests exceedingly; they are but the instruments of the people, and not their leaders: *tant pis, ma foi*. The people are good for nothing in their religion! No, sir, the hope of the church was the *noblesse*; but even they have deserted both church and state to take care of themselves. Still, if you do see a

devotee of your own sex on his knees before a shrine, or with his arms outstretched, you may take it for granted that it is Monsieur le Baron, or Monsieur le Marquis."

The lamentations of the *Béguine* over the neglected toilet of the Madonna, and the deplorable disuse of all those practices which in one nation constitute piety, and in another are accounted buffoonery, struck the English traveller as affording a remarkable feature in a country which had recently been deemed the most superstitious and bigoted of Catholic Christendom. The change implied was, however, by him deemed fatal to social order : for he was, or at least had been, of a party who, while they resisted the Catholic claims in Ireland even to the shedding of blood, and maintained the ascendancy of their own church in England as the only true and favoured religion of Heaven, had forced the Pope upon reluctant Italy, had replaced on their forfeited thrones the bigoted and persecuting despots of the Peninsula, and were the steady allies of all who upheld old forms, cherished old errors, and fortified old abuses.

Sir Frederick Mottram had now flattered the pious vanity of the old woman by admiring several bad pictures, and stopping before the neglected lateral altars of the church, when the tolling of a bell announced the coming celebration of some holy office. Having obtained all the information which, almost unconsciously, he had come to seek, from the *sœur Greite*, he took leave of his amusing old friend, with a secret conviction that she held no intimate communion with Madame Marguerite, and an expressed desire that he might again meet one from whom he had derived so much instruction.

"And where are you going then?" she asked with some anxiety : "for you have been so charitable, so good, and seem to have so true a vocation, that I should like now and then to speed a prayer after you in your wanderings."

"It would gratify me to be remembered in your oraisons," he replied, touched by the tremulous tenderness of her voice, which had taken the tone of departing friendship.

"You are going to some of the German spas, I suppose, for your health. I know them all. I travelled with *Madame l'Abbesse du chapitre de Namur*, as her companion and nurse, to all the waters, to Ems, to Schlangenbad, Wisbaden, Baden-Baden, and many others. They are all good ; for they all bring the invalid

back to Nature, to her hours, scenery, and diet. You will begin by Spa; and will perhaps be tempted to remain there by the beauties of the Forest of Ardennes. You have heard of the Forest of Ardennes?"

She stooped to pick up a wreath of *immortelles* which had fallen from some grim-looking saint. Rosalind, Orlando, Jaques, rushed upon the imagination of the most ardent votarist that the genius of Shakspeare ever warmed into idolatry.

"Yes!" he said, "I have heard of the Forest of Ardennes, through the medium of one on whose shrine I would hang this wreath" (and she permitted him to take it) "with a feeling as devotional, as that with which you are about to replace it on the head of your saint."

"*Gardez-le, monsieur, gardez-le!*" said the *Béguine*; "the offering has done its duty here. Keep it in remembrance of *la sœur Greite* of Bruges; and when you offer it to the saint you speak of, think of the sinner whom chance and St. Beghé have thrown in your way; unworthy as she is, she may perhaps prove a chosen vessel, to recall you to the path from which temptation has early led you. Farewell, monsieur! it is the last time you will see *la sœur Greite*."

"The last time, my good friend!" he repeated, considerably affected by the solemnity of her manner, and touched too by the gloom and silence of the place.

"I predict," said the *Béguine*, emphatically, "that we meet no more; so God and the good lady St. Beghé bless and guide you!"

She offered him her hand from beneath the voluminous sleeve of her habit. It lay for a moment, soft and small, in his; and he pressed it silently and with cordiality, when the opening of the screen door, and the entrance of the poor congregation afforded by the deserted quarter of the Béguinage, induced her to withdraw it hastily. Resuming her old pottering step and manner, she was the next moment involved with the remains of the sisterhood of St. Beghé, who, from a thousand, were now reduced to less than a score.

There was something in the scene and in the person he had quitted, that left a fanciful impression on Sir Frederick, whose merit and whose weakness it was, to be but too impressionable. He was

abstracted and preoccupied, and he wandered on, unobservant of the intricacies of the antique purlieus of the old town. Many a Spanish fabric arrested his step, such as Bossuet* has delighted to trace with so much fidelity and finesse; and many a Brabançon hotel caught his eye, whose masters consider it a religious duty to reside on the patrimonial mansion, transmitted to them from those stirring burghers who maintained the independence of Brabant, before Spanish bigotry and Austrian despotism had reared their hateful crest above the head of the old Belgian Lion.

It was now near four o'clock, and Sir Frederick was looking for some index by which to retrace his steps to the upper town, when he read at the corner of a street verging towards the ascent—'*la Putterie.*' On one of the largest and most antiquated houses of this street was inscribed, on a brass plate, '*Janssens père, Fabricant de Dentelles.*' Vandyke, the Princess's visit, and the hope of outbidding her, induced him to seize this opportunity of calling on the virtuoso tradesman; and a massive brazen knocker announced the intention by reiterated vibrations, that stunned the old-fashioned quarter, where no variation in the beat declares the aristocratic rank of the petitioner for entrance.

The door was almost immediately opened by a frightened *servante de la Campine*,** with an inquiry in Flemish of 'what was the matter?' The sight of the visitant calmed the terrors which his loud knock had awakened; and the broad, bright Brabançon face of the servant dilated into smiles, as she mustered up as much Flemish-French as went to inquire 'what was wanted for the service of monsieur?' Her curious cap, large gold ear-rings, coloured jacket, and full plaited petticoat, as she stood within the sculptured oaken frame of the massive door, gave a living picture of one of the coarse, cleanly, joyous fraus of the Flemish school.

To the information that he came to see a picture which was to be disposed of, she only replied by opening her eyes, and a '*S'il vous plaît, monsieur?*' He repeated his wishes in simpler and more concise phrase, but she shook her head, and drew the door closer, replying—

* A living Belgian artist, of less European celebrity than merit.

** The 'Campine' is the country between Brussels and Antwerp.

“*Je ne suis qu’un sujet, foyez-vous, monsieur.*”

Sir Frederick, thoroughly puzzled, thought of sending in the card of Madame Marguerite with his own, and asked if Monsieur Janssens was at home. At the name of her master, she brightened up and said, “*Ah! c’est not’ maître! Il est à la maison.*”

Fortunately, a servant-man now came to the aid of her very limited vocabulary. His rubicund, good-humoured countenance was set off by a pair of gold ear-rings, and he was carving a ponderous piece of bread and butter with a large clasp knife, as he advanced.

“*A moi, monsieur*, he said, laughing, and pushing aside the maid, in the pride of superior acquirement. “*Not’ demoiselle est indigène, voyez-vous.* Speak Flemish to her, and you will have answer enough.”

Sir Frederick gave his card, explained the object of his visit, and was instantly admitted into an immense vestibule. The lofty oaken wainscot was hung with pictures; shrubs and pots of flowers were placed on marble *encoignures* upon frames worthy of Vanbruggen’s chisel. A carved oaken settee, and an antique clock in a curious case, composed the furniture; while a broad and spacious staircase of polished oak to the left, conducted to the upper suite of apartments. The servant threw open the door of the *parloir*, and conducting in the stranger, said that he would inform his master.

“But, perhaps,” said Sir Frederick, recollecting the early hours of the lower town, “he is at dinner?”

The good Brabançon stared. “Dinner!” he said; “*nous sommes à notre goûté, nous autres sujets.* Our ladies are gone to the *salut*, and my master is in the garden-house.”

Then, almost forcing from Sir Frederick his hat and cane, he left the room. But, again suddenly returning, he opened a door which communicated with an adjoining apartment: it was the *salon*, or best room, the fane of domestic festivity and ostentation.

“There, monsieur,” he said, “*voilà de la pâture!* People come to see our pictures from all parts. There is a Hemskirk—that small picture of boors drinking; it is a gem. The Prince of Orange would have given any money for it; but our master would not sell it, as he said, to Maria Theresa herself, if she had come back from the grave to bid for it.”

He drew back the drapery of the window to throw a light upon

the picture, and then retired. Sir Frederick was amused by this little trait of plebeian *virtù* and national spirit. These were the feelings which, being incidental to all classes in the Low Countries, encouraged their great schools, and enriched the masters; and they well explain the domesticity of their favourite subjects. It was the people painting for the people; it was the contention of citizens for the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the Janssens, of the Van Helmonts, of the Hobbimas, which gave to the northern schools an eminence built upon a surer foundation, than that which fashion or favour, the breath of princes or the vogue of courts, can bestow.

Sir Frederick was intoxicated with the works of art in which the sober wainscoted parlour and more sumptuous *salon* abounded. The walls of the latter were covered with the still richly gilt Spanish leather; the architraves of the enormous doors were redundant in the *rococo* of the seventeenth century. The monumental stove, probably the work of some fashionable artist of the time of the Duke of Alva, displayed an architectural elevation; and every article of furniture was a chronicle of the Flemish taste and genius. The tapestry carpet was of Tournay.

The *armoires* of oak, sculptured in bold relief, with doors half-open, displayed some rare and costly chalices, glasses, and covers, with quaint mottoes engraved in gold, long tapering drinking-vessels, specimens of carved ivory from the East, and *boiseries* worthy of the chisel of Albert Durer. 'Indulging chairs' of immovable dimensions, with high carved backs and velvet seats, secured by broad brass nails, might pass for the models of the furniture in the beautiful conversation-piece of Rombout, or in an interior by Baptista Franks, both of which decorated the walls of the apartment. The whole was marked by a ponderous richness, that plainly indicated the forethought of a race who constructed for posterity, without calculating upon chance or change; while the total absence of modern taste was compensated by that neatness and propriety, that polished purity, which spoke the mistress of the mansion a vigilant and even fastidious housewife.

Sir Frederick was standing enraptured before the portrait of Catherine Culemborg, by Netcher, in a frame that was itself a work of art, when the servant entered by a glass-door from the garden, with a request that "the gentleman would walk to the summer-house,

where the Vandyke was to be seen." He led the way under an arching trellis-work, through a garden as full of flowers as if the tulip mania were still at its height. Monsieur Janssens came forward to the door of one of those pavilions so prevalent in the old-fashioned gardens of the Low Countries : he had risen from his indulging chair, with the flush of his *siesta* colouring his healthful countenance. A furred velvet cap just permitted a few grey hairs to escape over his broad brows. He was dressed in a *robe-de-chambre à grand ramage*, and wanted only a gold chain, to look the wealthy burgomaster of the olden times, the original of one of those nameless portraits now purchased at any price.

After his courteous assurance that he had 'the honour to salute the English virtuoso,' he insisted on seating him in the chair of honour, placed near a small table, on which a plate of biscuits, a glass tankard with its cover, and small goblets, were disposed. A cattle-piece, by Verboeckhoven, was hung on one side of the room ; and a curtained picture on the other. The rites of hospitality preceded those of the arts. A draught of Alambique, which looked like liquid topaz, was poured into a tall crystal glass, and recommended by Monsieur Janssens to Sir Frederick as a cordial. The biscuit was praised as '*la biscotte indigène*, which Corcellet and Chevet of Paris did not disdain to import.'

The good-breeding and the good appetite of the English guest equally induced him to avail himself of the old gentleman's after-dinner *goûté*; while he entered at once upon the motive of his visit, the desire to see and to purchase one of the best pictures of Vandyke at present in the market ;—so at least it had been described by Madame Marguerite.

"Humph ! You may believe her if she told you so," said the old man. "She knows what she is about, that Madame Marguerite ! *C'est une maîtresse femme* ! Not that she has much acquired knowledge. She has few rules, and no jargon. But her instincts are fine ! She lays her finger at once on a good picture : she can't tell you why, and laughs if you ask her."

"She is also a good artist," said Sir Frederick.

"Not a fine artist, monsieur, but a fine genius. She has worked for bread more than for fame, and therefore wants finish ; besides, she has indulged her taste more than consulted her interest. She

has, too, a knack of painting a fool like a fool, and a rogue like a rogue—not to be mistaken; and every one is sure to detect an enemy or a friend in the groups which she calls *figures de fantaisie*, but which every one insists are living characters. Her pictures have all a moral object; and so they were considered as epigrams, and our *noblesse* have never patronised her. She has the merit, however, of knowing a good picture when she sees it; and is among the few who appreciate our immortal Vandyke, and place him at the head of the Flemish school.”

“What! before Rubens?” asked Sir Frederick.

“Inasmuch as he is more Flemish, and less Dutch, monsieur.”

“I have only very lately learned the line of demarcation,” said Sir Frederick, much amused to see party spirit colouring even a passion for the arts.

“There is a line of demarcation,” said Monsieur Janssens, vehemently, “between all that is Dutch and Flemish, which neither Charles the Fifth in the sixteenth century, nor William of Nassau in the nineteenth, have been able to efface. We have nothing in common. Our schools of painting are as distinct as our national temperaments. Our Van Eykes and our Hemlinks, our Rubenses, our Van Balens, and, above all, our glorious Vandyke, come close upon the Cimabues, the Peruginos, the Titians, and the Veroneses; but they have nothing in common, either in their genius, character, or life, with the Rembrandts, the Ostades, or the Brouwers. There are heads by that king of painters, Vandyke, comparable only to the pictures which Titian left of the grand seigneurs of his time—the same elevation, the same elegance! But look at his own head! Compare it with the portraits of any of the Dutch painters, the genuine models of their own *bambocciate*. Remark, too, that the Dutch masters remained at home, living, like Rembrandt, in garrets and beer-shops, whereas ours travelled. Rubens, Vandyke, Miele visited foreign countries and courts, and they were gentlemen by the letters-patent of Nature, though they were the sons of men of the middling classes. Our Belgian nobles never produced much in the way of genius of any sort.”

Sir Frederick ventured to cite a Dutch painter of celebrity, who had remained many years at Rome, in the time of the Dominichinos, and of Guido — “Peter Wander.”

“ Well, sir, ” replied the old man, “ that Wander passed his life there, as in Holland, stigmatized as the *Oltra-montano* and the *Bamboccio*; and after twenty years’ residence in Italy, he returned to die in his native Haarlem, more *Bamboccio* than he left it. But with whom did the divine Guido study? Why, with a Flemish painter, sir; with Dionysius Calvert, called in Bologna *Il Fiamingo*. It was he that put Guido into the true path. He gave him his rules for drawing, and conferred force upon his *penello morbido*, as old Passeri calls it. When not engaged in my manufacture, I have studied a little Italian, sir, on purpose to read Passeri. We had also another Fiamingo, the Fiamingo *par excellence*, (Louis Pozzo,) the greatest landscape painter of his age; and also a third (named Brill), who established himself at Venice, and was in the highest repute all over Italy. ”

“ And yet, ” said Sir Frederick, “ we English prize the Dutch painters very highly; nor can I consent to abandon a school that has produced a Rembrandt, a Paul Potter, or a Gerard Dow! The latter we place fully on a par with your Teniers, as coming quite as close to nature. ”

“ To the nature of a broomstick, ” replied the passionate partisan, in allusion to the well-known anecdote. “ But our David Teniers gives as much elegance to his court subjects, as any royal painter of France or England. He throws imagination even over his Kermesses. There is a grace and an airiness in his groups, that show how much his genius ennobled subjects of the coarsest nature. ”

“ It was the peculiar luck of Teniers to have been the idolized painter of the people, and at the same time the artist most in vogue with the higher classes; and if that frippery Louis XIV. (spoiled by the cold affectations of Coypel and Mignard) cried out, when they brought him a Kermess of Teniers, ‘ *Qu’on m’ôte ces magots-là!* ’ many noble and crowned heads sought his friendship, and lived with him on terms of equality. They saw, in the joyous and naïve painter, the sublime mind which conceived ‘ *Les OEuvres de Charité*, ’ and ‘ *L’Enfant Prodigue*, ’ in the latter of which he has painted himself and his family. His works were those of a great man, his life that of an honest one; and his habits those of a gentleman. The director of the academy at Amsterdam, the gentleman of the chamber to Leopold, the friend of Queen Christine, and

the companion of Don Juan of Austria, was not a man like your Rembrandts, and your Dows, and Brouwers! We'll drink to the memory of David Teniers, sir, if you please."

Sir Frederick, much amused, touched his lips to the glass, and named David Teniers. A thought crossed his mind, that at that moment the Montessor party were riding over the race-course at Mont Plaisir, while he was drinking to the memory of Teniers in nutbrown ale, and listening to the virtuoso details of an old Brussels lace-maker. There was at least novelty in the situation.

"But, monsieur," continued the old man, "you will think me a *bavard*; and when you see this Vandyke, you will regret every moment wasted upon any other subject."

He arose, proceeded to the picture, but paused a moment with the cord in his hand before he raised the curtain.

"I must first explain to you, monsieur, why I let so fine a picture slip through my hands; being, as I am, a descendant of Vandyke by the female side; his daughter having married his favourite pupil Janssens, my great grandfather. Of this I am more proud, than if the heralds of Vienna could prove me of a family as ancient as the Trezeymers.* But I let the picture pass on a principle. It belonged to the church of St. Martin, in the village of Salthem, near Brussels, whence it disappeared, no one knew how. It would be sacrilege to buy it under such circumstances; however, there are others not so fastidious on this point. But sit down, sir, and take this glass. Consider the picture at your leisure. There is a story attached to it, an old tradition in our family. I had it from my grand-mother, Helen Janssens. Perhaps you would like to hear it?"

"Beyond everything," said Sir Frederick. "It will give the picture additional interest."

"You see it represents a Holy Family receiving a visit from St. Martin."

He raised the curtain as he spoke, and discovered a picture of such magnificence of conception, and brilliancy of colouring, as daz-

* Another claimant to a descent from Vandyke by Janssens exists in Brussels, in the fair person of Madame Charles Puqué, the wife of a young and ingenious portrait-painter of that name. The fine head of the descendant of the great master bears a considerable resemblance to his own.

zled both the eye and the imagination of the critical spectator.

“ There is a Madonna ! What flesh and blood ! what an eye ! what a hand ! ”

“ More of a Spanish than a Flemish beauty,” said Sir Frederick. “ It resembles a Madonna of Murillo.”

“ Bravo, monsieur, to be sure it does ; you are aware that Murillo was a disciple of Vandyke, and copied him closely. But here, you see, is a genuine Flemish peasant, with his *blouse*, in St. Joseph ; and as for St. Anne, she is a comely *frau*, and a true *Brabançonne*. Look too at this cavalier, monsieur ; what do you think of him ? Has not our St. Martin an *air de grand seigneur*, and a *costume chevaleresque* ? What a noble animal he has just mounted ! one is tempted to get out of its way, lest it should trample one under foot. What do you think, sir, of the gallant saint ? ”

“ Why, that he resembles all Vandyke’s pictures of himself.”

“ *C’est ça, monsieur*. It is Vandyke at one-and-twenty ; and this picture, which so long received religious honours, is neither more nor less than a love adventure of the painter—*que Dieu lui pardonne* !—which happened when he was on his way to Italy, where his friend and master, Rubens, sent him, and not without good cause. Every one knows how Rubens, the chief of the Flemish school, the prince of painters, lived in his palace at Antwerp, where his garden and portico still remain.”

“ I went,” said Sir Frederick, “ from Brussels to Antwerp, in the year Twenty-nine, expressly to see them. It is more than I shall now do to see the ruins of the citadel.”

“ Well, sir, it was in that palace he held his school, which was a school of morals and manners, as well as of art. It was a grand thing to see that splendid painter in the midst of his disciples, (generally as distinguished for their appearance as for their genius,) having the Archduchess Isabella, and other potentates, who delighted to converse with him at his easel.

“ Among his distinguished pupils, none was so gay, so gaillard as the young Vandyke. Vandyke’s mother was a celebrated beauty and artist : from her he received both his genius and his good looks : and from her he had his earliest impressions of art, and first lessons. Rubens saw at once in him a genius, and perhaps suspected a rival. Many of the master’s designs were filled out by the

scholar ; and many of Vandyke's pictures stil pass for Rubens's."

"It was a very sudden thought, and an odd one," said Sir Frederick, "in Rubens, to send away a pupil to Italy, who did so much honour to his school, and was so serviceable to his interests."

"The artists," replied the old man, "said it was professional jealousy ; but the gossips of Antwerp reported that it was jealousy of another kind. Certain it is, that one of the finest pictures which young Vandyke ever painted, was that of Rubens's wife, Helen Forman. He made it a present to his master, who shortly after offered him the hand of his own daughter by a former marriage. The world was amazed when the young artist refused the alliance with the rich heiress. You saw her picture, probably, at Ghent, in the Scamp Gallery?"

"Yes ; it is one of the most remarkable pictures in the collection."

"Well, sir, truth must out, as my grandmother Janssens said—Vandyke adored the stepmother. Whether Rubens suspected this or not, he strenuously advised him to visit Italy and study the Venetian school ; but Vandyke still lingered to paint a Christ in the olive-garden. Every one knows that famous picture ; the head of Christ is that of the painter. He left this picture behind him as a remembrance, and it long made a *pendant* to the Helen Forman, which Rubens himself had hung over the chimney-piece in his great room."

"That was a present of great value from so young a painter ; what a price it would bring now !" said Sir Frederick.

"Yes, sir, and so thought Rubens, who, not to be outdone, (for who ever surpassed Rubens in generosity ?) took from his magnificent stud an Arab given him by the King of Spain, and presented it, splendidly caparisoned, to Vandyke. There it is, sir ; you see St. Martin himself can scarcely hold it in. I have somewhere a sketch of Vandyke's departure from the house of Rubens. He is mounted on this Arab ; the arm of Rubens is thrown over the neck of the animal, while Vandyke stoops his head to catch his master's parting councils ; but his eyes—those dark eyes, which give our saint so unsaintly a look—are cast up to the window, where Helen Forman stands half-concealed by a drapery. The sketch is by Madame Marguerite, and is made after our tradition."

“I should like to see it, Monsieur Janssens,” said Sir Frederick, eagerly.

“Presently, sir, presently; we have not yet got to the end of our story of St. Martin. Vandyke cantered on to Brussels, looking like a cavalier of Wouvermans, just as you see he has made the saint curvetting it. You know the road from Antwerp, that nursery of great painters!—not a village along it that Teniers has not immortalized. But there was none so pretty in the seventeenth century as the village of Salthem, with its Gothic church and its beautiful peasant-girls. Well, the whole of its inhabitants waylaid Vandyke to do him honour, and to solicit him to paint a picture for the altar of their church. Flowers were strewed before his horse’s feet, and a chaplet of *immortelles*, just such a one as you hold in your hand there,” (Sir Frederick coloured; he had forgotten his chaplet,) “was presented to him by the beauty of the village: she was the miller’s daughter. Vandyke accepted the offer, but gallantly placed it on the dark head of the donor: it looked like a glory, and Vandyke saw before him the model of that handsome Madonna we are now looking at. He acceded to the request of the good people of Salthem, and the miller’s daughter became the Fornarina of the Flemish Raphael.

“You have heard of De Vien, monsieur, the celebrated French painter? He has made a charming drawing of this little episode in the life of Vandyke. It represents the enamoured painter sketching the Visitation of St. Martin to the Holy Family. His young mistress is leaning carelessly over the back of his chair, and his head is turned back, as if he was consulting, or, perhaps, admiring her: I have it in my collection. But I fear I am fatiguing you.”

“On the contrary, you only increase my desire to possess a picture so enriched by a sentimental interest. But as to the price——”

“We are not come to that yet, sir. We will, if you please, drink to the memory of our Brabançon Fornarina. When the news reached Rubens, that the pupil who, he thought, was in Italy, was still loitering over his picture in the neighbourhood of Brussels, he trembled for the honour of his school; and he sent his friend and guest, the Cavaliere Nani, an Italian gentleman then returning to his own country, to carry off Vandyke along with him. The picture was finished; so, too, perhaps, was the passion of that rogue the

painter. At all events, the cavalier succeeded in his mission, and carried Vandyke to Venice. Working in the schools of Titian and Veronese in that city, our immortal painter rivalled them in some of their merits, and surpassed them in others. You know the rest of his life, so much of which was passed in your own country."

"Yes; it was a splendid romance. His visit to Charles the First, his marriage with a great lady—the Lady Mary Ruthven, and the honours conferred on him, in creating him a Knight of the Bath."

"As for that," said Monsieur Janssens, clasping his hands, and gazing earnestly on the head of Vandyke, "what can kings do for such a man as this? Who knows, out of England, that he was a Knight of the Bath? What does it mean? His dignities were in his genius; his honours were in his immortal pictures; and as to the great lady he married, he had better have married one of his own class, for he never throve afterwards,—one like his mother, a noble lady of Nature's own creation, (as Madame Marguerite said this day when she was looking at the picture.) But you English are so very aristocratic."

"I, at least," said Sir Frederick, "am rejoiced that your painter condescended to marry a daughter of Lord Ruthven; for that lady was a collateral ancestor of my wife, and gives me a sort of claim to be considered a connexion of the family."

"*Comment, donc, monsieur!*" said the old gentleman, his countenance brightening into cordiality,—"you, too, are a relation of Vandyke! I thought there was something about you, unlike what I had ever observed of your countrymen before."

"Still," replied Sir Frederick, "it is but justice to our country to say, that we honoured Vandyke while living, and that his remains, when dead, were interred in our great metropolitan church of St. Paul."

"I would much rather," said the old enthusiast, wiping a tear from his eye, "that they had reposed in the great church of St. Paul at Antwerp, under his own picture of 'Christ carrying his Cross.'"

To the *blasé* Englishman, there was something almost enviable in the freshness of feeling and fanaticism for the arts, which drew tears to the eyes of an old man, in honour of a great painter. He paused to let the flush of emotion pass; but, considerably interested

in a picture to which the garrulity of age and *virtù* had given an additional charm, he soon afterwards asked—

“ And how came this picture into the market ? ”

“ Up to the French revolution, it had remained the treasure of the church of Salthem. It was then carried to the Louvre : but after the battle of Waterloo, when kings and pictures were sent back to their old habitations, St. Martin was restored, along with the rest. One fine day, however, as if by a miracle, the picture again disappeared, and was never heard of more, till some months back, when it again came into the market, and was purchased by a person, who, desirous of making money by it, has left it here for sale. ”

“ And now, ” said Sir Frederick, worked up to a pitch of enthusiasm almost as great as that of the lace-manufacturer, “ and now to the point—the price. ”

M. Janssens drew forth a magnificent snuff-box, with a head of Vandernoot set on the lid, deliberately took a pinch, and offered it to the eager chapman.

“ The price ! ” he said, “ that picture is above all price ; and, in fact, it has brought a great price, for times like these, when people are thinking more of politics than pictures. It sold, not two hours back, for ”

“ Sold ? ” interrupted Sir Frederick ; “ is it then sold ? ”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! Did I not tell you so ? This is what my *bavardage* comes to. Why, to be sure ; it was sold this morning. ”

“ And who is the fortunate purchaser ? ” said the disappointed connoisseur, unaccustomed to be outbid in a matter of taste.

“ The Princess of Schaffenhause. Madame Marguerite, her agent in the purchase, paid the money, in golden *napoléons*, not two hours back. ”

Sir Frederick remained silent ; and Monsieur Janssens dropped the curtain, much pleased to have found a fresh auditor for his traditional anecdotes. Favourably impressed by the taste of his willing hearer, he invited Sir Frederick to take coffee ; observing,

“ It is not usual, *Monsieur le Chevalier*, in the old quarters of Brussels, to admit strangers into the bosom of the domestic society. But a connexion of Vandyke makes all the difference. My wife and daughters are probably returned from the *salut*. ”

With a low bow, he then led the way to the *salon*. Sir Frederick followed, at once amused and disappointed; yet resolved to see the adventure out, and to take coffee before dinner, as he had already sipped ale after breakfast.

At the moment when they entered from the garden, the door opposite, leading from the hall, was thrown open by the formal old servant, and a loudly laughing joyous group bounced in. The women of the party, old and young, were all in their black silk *failles*. A priest in his quaint ridiculous habit (revived since the Revolution), a young man in his military *blouse*, were equally picturesque in their appearance. There was one type of physiognomy running through the whole family, as in the family pictures of Frank Halls, proving an unmixed race. The presence of the stranger, as soon as it was perceived, at once silenced their mirth and steadied their movements. All were surprised, and the women abashed by the appearance of a foreigner; an event so unexpected in their calculations.

“My wife—my daughters,” said the manufacturer, taking Sir Frederick’s hand, and presenting him separately to all the party. “This gentleman, who has come to buy St. Martin, a little too late, has the honour to be a connexion of the family of the immortal Vandyke. He has the happiness to be married to a descendant of the Lady Mary Vandyke. He may well be proud of the circumstance.”

To the formal curtsy of the Mesdames Janssens, Sir Frederick was endeavouring to return as formal a bow, when, raising his head, his eyes met those of Madame Marguerite, whose dark splendid countenance shone forth with a sibyl contrast to the fair, round Flemish faces of the other females. Like them, she was habited in the *faille*; but she wore it with quite another effect. She bowed archly to Sir Frederick’s confused recognition, and then took her seat in the deep *embrasure* of an old-fashioned window. The other females sat all in a row on the edges of the high-backed chairs, regimented against the wall; the line beginning with Madame Janssens *grand’mère*, and ending with a fair chubby-faced girl in a round-eared cap, her youngest grandchild. Their calm countenances and cold blue eyes bore testimony to minds on which the passions had made no trace, and care induced no cloud. An

arm-chair was presented to the English guest. The three gentlemen occupied a settee of as many compartments.

This prim arrangement completed, a collation was rung for, and presented on trays by the man and maid. Tall crystal glasses, the fragile monuments of past times, preserved for generations by the most minute precaution, were half-filled with Burgundy, as bright as themselves. Coffee, tartines, fruit, sweetmeats, and a tankard of the precious *bière de Louvain*, afforded a variety of luxury, which seemed to concentrate universal attention. The voice of Janssens *père* alone was heard, as he pressed his English guest to taste a *petit pain à la Grecque*, or to drink of his choice wine.

Sir Frederick in vain endeavoured to move his ponderous chair towards the window where Madame Marguerite was niched. It was immovable ; and the moral courage he exhibited, in walking across the room and carelessly leaning against the frame of the window with his back towards the rest of the company, struck them with surprise, as a breach at least in the code of Brabançon good-breeding.

“ You have played me false, Madame Marguerite,” he said, in a low murmur : “ the Vandyke is already sold to you, for the Princess of Schaffenhause.”

“ Why did you not apply sooner ?” she replied : “ you rich English are always behindhand. You expect that circumstances will await your leisure ; but these are times in which even the greatest men must wait on circumstances.”

“ It would be difficult,” he said, petulantly, “ to keep pace with one whose movements, like those of a steam-engine, are more rapid than comprehensible.”

“ It is that difficulty that makes all the difference between mind and mind. Time, with me, is property. The sands in my hour-glass are all of gold, and I cannot afford to lose a grain. It belongs to energetic indigence to get the start of lazy wealth.”

“ If you apply the phrase to me,” he said, “ you are mistaken. I have been busily occupied the whole morning.”

“ Strolling about the town,” she interrupted, laughingly, “ with that old gossip, *la Sœur Greite*. I suspect you gave her rendezvous at St. Beghé’s to-day. We passed you, I believe, as the Princess conveyed the old *Béguine* to her head-quarters.”

“ Yes, I *was* the *guindé* person whom you passed. But my rendezvous with the *Béguine* was an accident.”

“ Was your visit to the Béguinage an accident also ? You are perhaps aware that there are some who adopt the great coif of St. Beghé for purposes not all tending towards Heaven.”

“ I have suspected as much,” he said, pointedly : “ the spirit of intrigue finds its account in all disguises ; and none furnishes so many as religion. But what brought the Princess of Schaffenhauseu and Madame Marguerite to the desolate quarters of the Béguinage ? ”

“ Merely to set down the old sister at her afternoon devotions. We were on our way to pay for the Vandyke, which I had purchased this morning from my old friend Janssens. But if you have missed the picture, are you not amused by the originals ? ”

“ Beyond measure ; and I owe that pleasure, with many others, to you. I wish you would afford me an opportunity of expressing more fully my sense of the obligation. Your apparitions are those of an *ignis fatuus* ; and the few occasions I have had of profiting by your advice, have arisen in chance only. But grateful as I am for the past, I would not willingly trust the future to the same uncertainty.”

“ At least avail yourself of the present, and attend to your hosts and to their conversation,” she said, dropping her voice. “ If, in your quality of statesman, you are desirous of obtaining information relative to the political state of these people, this is the circle where the truth will easiest be got at. Besides, it is against the law of Belgian good-breeding, which still clings to Spanish gravity and German etiquette in the quarter of the Puterie, to”

He interrupted her with vehemence.

“ One word, and I will obey you. Where are you going ? with whom ? When and where may I again hope to meet you ? Will you allow me to sit to you for my picture, for a friend in England ? And if, as the *Béguine* says, (for, truth to tell, I only sought her to obtain some information about you,) you are going to Schaffenhauseu with your Princess, will you endeavour to soften her prejudices against me, and obtain me an invitation to her castle on the Rhine ? ”

“ To meet your wife ? ” asked Madame Marguerite.

Sir Frederick started. "Is she expected positively, then, at the Princess's castle?"

"I think I have heard that Lady Frances Mottram makes one of a large party of English invited there, or rather, who have invited themselves."

The blood rushed into Sir Frederick's face at this confirmation of the worst suspicions he had entertained of his wife's prevarication and manœuvring contrivance.

"I hope I have not said anything to annoy you," she continued. "Miladi Frances and the Princess are great friends : in London they were inseparables. But turn round ; Monsieur Janssens is offering you wine."

"I propose you a toast, *Monsieur le Chevalier*," said the old man, as he presented a glass of Burgundy, and took another from the *plateau* for himself ; "I am sure you will pledge me with all your heart :—May the alliance between reformed England and liberated Belgium be as permanent as it must prove honourable and serviceable to both nations !"

"I beg to be permitted to join in that toast," said the priest ; "and I am sure Mr. Elias Janssens will have no objection to make one."

"We women of Brussels were not idle during the Four Days," said Madame Marguerite ; "may we not take our *eau de groseille* to the same tune and time to which you, messieurs, quaff your *château-margot*? Which of you gentlemen performed more service than Madame Janssens and her daughters, when they received the wounded in their own house, and attended the whole time at the hospitals?"

"Brava, Madame Marguerite !" exclaimed young Janssens ; "you are in the right ! Allow me the honour of serving you."

The fair, impassible countenances of the females flushed with the honest blush of self-satisfaction ; and the toast was drunk with a reflective earnestness by all the party ; while Sir Frederick, feeling for a moment the ardour of European liberalism, forgot that he was an English Tory, a term which belongs as little to the age as——an English Whig, or a French Doctrinaire.

The toast gave rise to a conversation purely political, to which Sir Frederick lent, as Madame Marguerite had advised, a willing

ear. The subject was discussed with an earnest frankness by the men, and listened to with deference and attention by the women. Each of the latter drew her knitting from the little bag that hung on her arm; excepting only Madame Marguerite, who sat sketching on a card produced from a portfolio, which, on entering the room, she had deposited on the window-seat. The scene presented an admirable subject to such a pencil as hers; and the flexile figure of the elegant Englishman, as he lounged in his arm-chair, while every other person, even to the comely little girl who was winding a ball of thread at her grandmother's feet, sat bolt upright, was not the least remarkable in the entire group.

The conduct of the people of Brussels during the Four Days had gradually become the chief point of interest; and it was curious to observe how great a change it produced in the external expression of the debaters;—a change particularly observable in the manly physiognomy and resolute gesture of the younger Janssens, (who represented the educated youth of Belgium,) and in the energetic manners of the republican priest, the epitome of a class which had always existed and always been popular in the Low Countries.

During a momentary pause in the conversation of the Belgians, and in reference to the remark of the last speaker, Sir Frederick Mottram observed :

“ I never very clearly understood what determined the immediate march of the Dutch troops upon the city, at the outbreak of the Four Days.”

“ The moment chosen for the attack,” said the young man, “ was so far appropriate, that it presented the fewest apparent elements of opposition. The *Garde Bourgeoise*, established for the protection of property, had shown itself unequal to the new position it had assumed, as guardian of the independence of Brussels, and it had lost the confidence of the people. On the day previous to the attack, a rising of the populace had disarmed them, dispersed their officers, and taking possession of the Hôtel-de-Ville, (the seat of government,) had left us absolutely without any acknowledged authorities : the fact soon found its way to Prince Frederick. . . .”

“ And he, of course, thought,” said Sir Frederick, “ that by advancing his troops he would take an unresisted possession of the

town. The expectation was natural, and the action consequent."

"With any other people," replied the elder Janssens, "the expected surrender would probably have been the result. But the Belgian history is a suite of barrings-out, conducted by the populace of the great towns against their feudal oppressors, to which the example of Paris was a case strictly analogous."

"Yes," added the priest, "that event was well calculated to rouse the traditional feelings of the people; and the resistance it awakened was something more than a servile imitation: it was all the more effectual because it was not planned; because it was the work of individual volitions; and was guided only by each man's desire to place himself there, where his exertion was the most wanted, and would be most effectual."

"What part," said Sir Frederick, "did the upper classes take in the battle?"

"From the lists of killed and wounded, since published," said young Janssens, "it is positive that the brunt of the Four Days' action was borne by the operatives of the town, assisted by bands of peasants and artisans, who flocked into Brussels from all parts; and of whom the Liégeois were the most remarkable."

"I saw them enter the town," said Madame Marguerite, "with Charles Rogier at their head. They swept by the balcony on which I was standing, with an effect glorious to witness."

"And this revolutionary leader," said Sir Frederick, "has long since, doubtless, paid the usual penalty of taking the initiative in such adventures, by becoming the first victim of the perilous drama?"

"He is at present," replied Madame Marguerite, coolly, "the minister of the interior."

"But what became of the wealthy and middle classes?" reiterated Sir Frederick.

"Very few of that class," said old Janssens, "had committed themselves irremissibly with William; and, as is usual under such circumstances, they mostly held back. Even those most compromised contented themselves with retreating to the frontiers, on the approach of the enemy; and it was not till the news arrived of the first day's success, that many of the men, who have since taken the lead in the revolution, returned to share in its dangers."

“Yes,” said the priest, “it was under the fire of the King’s troops, and when bombs were falling into the city, that Baron d’Hooghvorst, the ex-commander of the *Garde Bourgeoise*, Rogier, a stranger to the town, and one or two more, seized the reins of authority, which had fallen to the ground, and *improvised* a government to conduct the defence; and it was not till the third day that a military commander-in-chief was appointed in the person of Van Halen.”

“Had there not been any secret agency previously at work?” again asked Sir Frederick; “no distributions of arms, or of money?”

“None whatever,” they all replied, eager to communicate the information, and flattered by Sir Frederick’s marked interest in the tale. “Everything was spontaneous, everything individual; nor does it very clearly appear whence the very ammunition came. Up to the second day, that important item was collected altogether from private and personal resources.”

“But what possible motive,” said Sir Frederick, “could have urged the populace, a class without sentiments or principles, to so desperate a defence?”

“When I was in England,” replied Madame Marguerite, “it was fashionable to attribute their zeal to a thirst of plunder. But the facts are distinctly against the calumnious imputation.”

“No, monsieur,” said the young man, his countenance kindling beyond the ordinary warmth of a Flemish temperament “from the 25th to the 29th of September, the city was in the full possession of our artisans; yet, with the sole exception of one house burnt and pillaged, in the intoxication of victory, and under the excitement of an imputed act of treachery on the part of the owner, there was not a single act authenticated to justify the imputation. My father here threw open his house to refresh the combatants during the whole siege; this room among the rest. Not a single article was injured, not a spoon or a fork carried away.”

“For what, then, did they fight?” said Sir Frederick, “for I am most earnest to know the truth on a point so little understood.”

“You English aristocrats, I fear,” continued Madame Marguerite, “will never understand that point. The populace (those scapegoats of society, whom you charge with all its sins) are not such fools as you imagine. They do not syllogize and divide in their philosophy;

but, pressed by necessity, and often by hunger, they possess a clearness and promptitude of judgment within their own sphere of thought, which your elaborate deliberations seldom reach."

"I know the class intimately," said young Janssens, "as an employer; and they are not like Figaro's soldiers, who suffer themselves to be butchered without knowing why. They might not be personally annoyed by the introduction of a foreign language into our law-courts, nor feel the exclusive promotion of Dutchmen to offices of trust; but the lowest Belgian has his national honour, and his hereditary national prejudices and opinions, as well as the best."

"And woe to the country," said Madame Marguerite, "where a national feeling does not exist even in the beggar in the street! But the populace were touched in man's tenderest point—in the stomach: the taxes were grinding; and employment had failed. Salvator Rosa has justly said, that 'no matter what scourge Providence may inflict upon nations, it is the poor who bear the brunt.'"

"Humph!" said old Janssens, as if not understanding, or not relishing, the sentiment. "Yet, after all, it is as well that the lower classes should feel an interest in their country, even though it be through their necessities; for if the affair had been left to the shopkeepers and gentry of Brussels, William of Nassau might still be *Roi des Pays-Bas*. Though they were good patriots, they were clearly not equal to the emergency: and though perhaps equally ready to *payer de leurs personnes* with the workmen, they were terribly afraid of their shops and strong-boxes. It was not, as in our great revolution of Eighty-nine, when Vonk and Vandernoot. . . ."

"The impulse of the operatives," interrupted young Janssens, "to defend the city from a military occupation, which is the last of national misfortunes, was no taught dogma; it was not even inspired by the collision of minds in pot-houses and other points of assemblage. It was an electric spark propagated in the moment of emergency: it arose with the occasion; and it was equal to the occasion. The mission of defending the revolution belonged to the mass, and fortunately they felt, if they did not understand, it. No one can say they erred; no one will be hardy enough to assert that a tame surrender of Brussels could have been followed by any other result than that which it would have so well merited—a complete and universal despotism."

“ And pray observe, Sir Frederick,” said Madame Marguerite, “ that the blow once struck, the victory won, the people returned to their occupations ; and left the constituting a government to those more competent to the task than themselves. There was, surely, great national good sense in this moderation.”

“ Certainly,” observed the Priest, “ we owe a vast debt to the artisans of Brussels ; but, after all, a revolution of some sort was approaching. Insulted as the Belgians had been in their nationality, outraged in their religion, and defrauded in their financial relations, by the Dutch, the majority of the people were determined on resistance, and the event was inevitable.”

“ So, indeed, it struck us Tories, who were then in office in England,” said Sir Frederick. “ We were no lovers of revolution ; and if we embarked in the system of protocols, it was because we were fully sensible of the necessity of the case.”

“ Bravo !” said Madame Marguerite, in a low voice. And she added aloud, “ Had you witnessed the scenes at which I was present during the Four Days (scenes of such heroism, humanity, and, above all, of dogged perseverance under every disadvantage,) your convictions on that head would have strengthened an hundredfold.”

“ Yes,” said young Janssens, “ could you have seen the brave fellows returning day after day to the scene of action, and, when fainting with thirst and heat, refusing intoxicating liquors and calling for water ; could you have seen them breaking through the party-walls of a long row of houses to get at the enemy”

“ *Eh bien ! eh bien ! mon fils,*” interrupted the old man, petulantly ; “ *vous prêchez des convertis.* We are all, I hope, agreed that our revolution of 1830 was indispensable, just, and perfect ; but we must not forget its great precursor, our Brabançon revolution of Eighty-nine. Monsieur le Chevalier, you see before you an old Brussels patriot of that epoch when the names of Vonk and Vandernoot were in every mouth ; when the three colours of Brabant were painted on every fan and worn in every dress. These youngers think nobody ever made a revolution but themselves. I was then younger than Elias there by many years ; and I remember, the day when it broke out, being sent by my father with a point-lace head to the Duchesse d’Ursel”

Here certain symptoms of impatience were exhibited in the coun-

tenances of the family : the old lady coughed, Elias Janssens whispered the priest, and Madame Marguerite passed her finger over her lip, as she directed an arch glance at Sir Frederick.

“ And so, as I was crossing the Grande Place, strange groups were pouring in from Willebroek and other faubourgs ; and whom should I meet in front of the Broodhuys but young Jans Van Haslin, of Mechlin, the son of the rich lace-merchant. He had never been at Brussels, and was staring at the statue of the Virgin, and was reading aloud, like a scholar of Louvain, the inscription—‘ *A peste, fame, et bello libera nos, Maria pacis,* ’ when I came behind him, and ”

At this moment the *pendule* struck seven, and the company arose, as if by the same movement which directed the little figures of the German clock-work. The conversation-party, the type of the *estamienieto*, (introduced by Spanish fashion three centuries before,) broke up at the same moment at which it had done so, in the Janssens’ family, for the last fifty years.

There was now an *assaut de politesse* on all sides ; curtsies and bows were made to the very ground. Madame Marguerite saluted her friends severally ; Madame Janssens, the priest, and the young ladies, sat down to *loto* ; Madame Elias retired to hear the children their prayers and put them to bed ; Elias proceeded to the arcade of the *Café des Mille Colonnes* ; and Janssens *père* exchanged his *robe-de-chambre* for his *redingote*, in the adjoining wainscoted parlour, with the intention *de faire son estaminet* at the *Comte d’Egmont*, in the Place Wallon.

Sir Frederick had not half returned the bows directed to him, when, perceiving the retreat of Madame Marguerite, he cut short all further ceremony, and followed her to the door ; but she was already seated in the calash he had seen in the morning at the entrance of St. Beghé.

“ You are like a fire-fly, ” he said, laying his hand on the carriage-door, “ as bright and as evanescent. ”

“ The simile holds good in some respects, ” she replied, “ for my light, such as it is, is all my own—unreflected, unborrowed : few of you great luminaries can say as much. ”

“ I remember, ” he observed, coming still closer, “ when I was in Milan, walking alone, on a gloomy evening, to *La Simonetta*.

From the myriads of brilliant insects that lighted its melancholy solitudes, I chased and with difficulty caught one, which I secured in my bosom and brought home. When all other lights were extinguished, in the deep darkness of an Italian night, that light shone bright and pure, like a fairy star, cheering the imagination and delighting the eye. If again I could secure such an '*animale pèleggrino, gentile*'—if for me was still reserved. . . ."

"And what became of your fire-fly?" interrupted Madame Marguerite, fixing her inquiring eyes on Sir Frederick's; "did it survive the night?"

"Yes; but it fell during the day from the flower on which I had placed it."

"And you trampled it under foot!" she replied, in a tone of the deepest emphasis and expression.

"*Ah! c'est vous, Monsieur le Chevalier,*" said old Mr. Janssens, coming forth from his hall-door, with his ivory-headed cane and broad-brimmed hat: "*Pardie*, I have half a mind to take you to the *Comte d'Egmont*. It is well worth seeing. It reminds one more of the old *Corbeau* than any *estaminet* of the present day."

He took Sir Frederick's arm, and the carriage drove away. Sir Frederick wished the *Comte d'Egmont*, and even the worthy Mynheer Janssens, at the bottom of the Senne.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Monsieur Janssens," he said; "but I want to follow Madame Marguerite, to obtain an address, and. . . ."

"You cannot follow her without your hat. You have come out before Antoine could give it to you: *êtes-vous vifs, vous autres Anglais!* And then, your *guirlande d'immortelles*; perhaps you are going to place it on the tomb of one of our patriotic victims in the Place St. Michel. Shall I have it sent to your hotel? *Antoine, viens donc.*"

Sir Frederick accepted the offer, and gave the chaplet to the servant, who now brought him his hat and cane. He felt how narrowly he had escaped the absurdity of carrying such an object through the streets of the upper town. The triumvirate of the Bellevue rose up to scare him at the very idea. The old gentleman had again taken Sir Frederick's arm, and they walked together down the Puterie,

“ I remember, ” he continued, “ when I thought little of making four *estaminets per diem*. I now confine myself to one. Times are strangely changed ; nobody smokes, or drinks Faro in the *Haute Ville* now. ”

“ I think they are all the better, ” said Sir Frederick, peevishly, and bored beyond measure by his predicament : “ it is a stupifying habit you Belgians have of drinking beer perpetually ; for I believe your *estaminet* means that. ”

The old gentleman withdrew his arm, offended at the bluntness of the observation.

“ But, ” said Sir Frederick, something shocked at his own petulance ; “ after all, every nation has its favourite beverage. ”

“ Monsieur le Chevalier, ” said Mr. Janssens, with some coldness, “ I believe you are right. We do drink more of our excellent malt liquors than is favourable to our vivacity. But we owe the habit, like many others, to our foreign masters. We were once almost as lively a race as the French themselves ; for we are both of the common stock of Franks. We lived like them, then, on the wine of our own vineyards. But that did not suit the commercial interests of the Spaniards ; and while they rooted up the vine in these provinces, to force a market for their own Sherry and Canary wines, they affected to extol our Brussels beer, by giving it the name of Faro : a name assigned to the precious beverage grown in the south of the Peninsula. We swallowed the compliment and the beer together ; and ever since, it has had its place, with French Burgundy and Spanish Malaga, at our convivial meetings. It is scarcely fair, monsieur, to judge the manners of a nation, without knowing something of its history. ”

Sir Frederick felt the necessity of attempting an apology, in which he was interrupted by the old gentleman—

“ *Du tout, du tout, monsieur,* ” said Mr. Janssens, taking off his hat ; “ we Brabançons are a little tetchy ; we want the coolness of our brothers, the good Flemings. But that is your way to the upper town. I will not let you go further. ”

“ The fact is, ” said Sir Frederick, standing with his hat in his hand, in imitation of Monsieur Janssens, “ I have not yet dined : otherwise I would accompany you to *faire mon estaminet*, were it only to convince you that we English can drink ale, and smoke

a cigar, with the best Brabançon of you all. Another time, if you will allow me”

“*Comment! monsieur*, a relation of the great Vandyke! and presented to us by our good friend Madame Marguerite! you will do us honour; we shall willingly admit you. But so true a lover of the arts, so liberal a purchaser, (for Madame Marguerite tells me you have some of the finest pictures, for which you have given the largest prices, in England,)”

“Where could she have learned that?” thought Sir Frederick.

“You must get her to show you the work-rooms of some of our modern artists. *A l’honneur de vous revoir, Monsieur le Chevalier.*”

The Brabançon lace-merchant then proceeded to his *estaminet*; and the son of the manufacturer of Birmingham returned to his seven-o’clock dinner at the *Hôtel de Flandre*.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FRACAS.

SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM, after a late, and almost untasted dinner, was sipping his claret, and reading the ‘*Indépendant*,’ in which his own arrival was announced, with a pompous display of his former ministerial rank and present personal distinctions, when Fegan, with his usual flourish of trumpets, flung open the door, and announced, with the emphasis of a herald-at-arms, the Marquis of Montessor, Lord Alfred Montessor, and the Honourable Mr. Montague St. Leger.

“Your Paddy Menalcas* is *impayable*,” said Lord Montessor.

* On an expected visit of a great man to one of the show-places of Ireland (the Leasowes of the county of — — —), the servants of the farm were dressed and named after the personages of a Virgilian eclogue. One of these shep-

“ Where did you pick him up, and for what purpose? One doesn’t lionize such a tiger as that for nothing?”

“ I picked him up,” replied Sir Frederick, half rising, while the gentlemen flung themselves on a couch, “ in my own stables, where he was living *en retraite*, in consequence of a broken arm, got behind my cab some years back. He was neglected by my coachman, who had orders to take care of him, and did not; so I have taken him into active service myself. He is an excellent groom.”

“ Groom!” said Lord Alfred, laughing; “ page of the presence, you mean. He is dressed like a young gentleman about to appear in the character of Belcour; and he figures about like a master of the ceremonies in a country ball-room.”

“ He answers my purposes for the present,” said Sir Frederick, coldly; “ but I am hiring foreign servants, and shall probably send him back to his former station.”

“ Oh!” said Lord Montessor, putting the head of his gemmed cane to his lips, and looking significantly at his companions, while Sir Frederick seemed intent on tearing up a bunch of grapes, and was evidently displeased with the intrusion of his guests; “ report says that you are going to form a foreign establishment altogether, and to reside abroad for some time for the recovery of your health, and for the enjoyment of *virtù*.”

“ Report is a babbling gossip,” said Sir Frederick, petulantly, “ who devotes her strenuous idleness to echoing the nonsense she does not credit. Is your wife coming abroad, Montessor?”

“ Am I my wife’s keeper?” said Lord Montessor, yawning.

“ No, not *you*,” said Sir Frederick.

Lord Alfred bit his lips, and knitted his brow.

“ But you probably know whether she is coming abroad or not. I had a letter from Lady Frances which mentions her own intention of coming as far as Brussels with a party of friends; I take it for granted they are Lady Montessor’s coterie.”

herds, ‘ for the nonce,’ had been laboriously drilled to answer the question of ‘ Who are you?’ by saying, ‘ I am Menalcas.’ When the time for action came, and the preconcerted question was put, in the presence of the distinguished visiter, the boy replied, with an air of perfect self-satisfaction, ‘ I am Paddy Menalcas, plaze your honor!’

The gentlemen exchanged looks.

“Humph!” said Lord Montessor. “Yes, Georgina is not getting on. She proposes—that is, her doctors propose, that she should go to the Brunnens. I am waiting for her here, for we are her only advanced guard; and if you are going to push on, you had better leave us your route between Brussels and Baden. Lady Frances’s accompanying her is the most likely thing in the world; and if so, we will deliver our consignment in the like good condition to your address.”

“I have written to Lady Frances to stop her journey,” said Sir Frederick. “My own movements are uncertain; and, at all events, business and friends will require my return to Mottram Hall by October. I have half-promised the Duke a *battu*.”

“Pray Heaven,” said Lord Alfred, with mock gravity, “your letter gets in time to Carlton-terrace; for I should not wonder if the party were already on the road. I know the Princess of Schaffhausen expects them.”

Sir Frederick stooped to pick up the napkin he had let fall; and the suffusion left by the effort on his brows was still apparent when he arose.

“By the bye, I have given the Princess rendezvous at the Opera,” continued Lord Alfred, as he looked at his watch. “Nearly nine, by Jove!”

The gentlemen started up.

“We are come,” said Mr. St. Leger, “to take you to the theatre, Mottram; so order your coffee, and let us be off: we have the French Ambassador’s box.”

“I hate the theatre,” said Sir Frederick, rising and ringing for coffee; “will any of you take *chasse*?”

They had all gone through the *régime de rigueur* of the evening, and were impatient for the *spectacle*.

“Ay, but the ‘*Pré aux Clercs*,’” said Mr. St. Leger, “with Cholet and the Prevôt, are novelties. You don’t hate music?”

“That depends,” said Sir Frederick, who, after a little coquetry and a little reluctance, suffered himself to be persuaded.

The French Ambassador’s box was already full, chiefly of travelling English, passing through Brussels to the Rhine; for never

since the pouring down of the northern hordes from their Scythian forests to its frontier shores, had the Rhine been so invaded by any roving irruption, as in the summer of 1855. The new-comers, according to the etiquette of foreign boxes, took the *pas*, and occupied the front row ; but after reconnoitring for a few moments the front of the house with their glasses, the Lords Montessor drew back, to talk English politics, scandal, and sporting intelligence with the newer arrivals from London.

Sir Frederick Mottram directed his opera-glass in search of the Princess of Schaffenhhausen's box ; but he saw nothing that resembled the fantastic dress and remarkable figure, (the all that he knew,) of the Princess ; nor was there anything that he could even mistake for Madame Marguerite. The return of Lord Alfred after a short absence, announced the fact that the Princess had resigned the box lent her by Madame Engler, whose own beautiful face and elegant toilet were very distinguishable, in a circle where beauty was sometimes rather rare, and where dress was usually more conspicuous for its precision than its *éclat*.

In the *balcon*, however, and immediately under the Ambassador's box, there was a dress sufficiently remarkable to attract very general attention, not only from the loungers in the *loge diplomatique*, but from the parterre beneath. The wearer was so truly Dutch in her build, as to excite some unfavourable impressions in many of the Belgian spectators. A wreath of white roses, encircling her broad brow, formed a dazzling contrast with the deep red roses that suffused her cheek ; and the pea-green plumes which waved before the eyes of Sir Frederick, as he sat behind her, matched with her velvet robe much better than with the tresses of a *blonde hardie* (to say the least) of the head they adorned.

A bust more *décolleté* than the laws of Belgian decency permit, gave relief, by its whiteness, to a collar of emeralds, which, for their size, seemed fragments of that 'first gem of the earth,' whose hue they imitated. The whole exposure was so little in keeping with the decent *Cannezones*, the snow-white *Vandykes*, and the capped and bonneted heads of the female frequenters of the *balcon* of the Brussels theatre (the most modest, proper, and reserved of all European audiences,) as to raise suspicions that this singular personage was of an order not supposed to exist in civilized society.

By the side of the lady, whom some of the elder Bruxellois declared to be a living impersonation of La Pino, the celebrated mistress of Vandernoot, sat and slept a portly model of the Sheriffalty of Dublin—to those, at least, who might happen to be acquainted with the type of city honours on a gala day. A full suit of black gave relief to a massive gold chain, with a double-eyed lorgnette, hanging from his neck. He wore powder in his hair, a brilliant brooch in his shirt, and a profusion of cravat that might have recalled to Belgian antiquaries the original article of that name, introduced into the toilet of the Low Countries, and borrowed from the Croats by Philippe-le-Bon in the fifteenth century. Whether he was the owner, or the attendant merely, of the very *éveillée* person by whose side he slumbered (while Cholet and Prevôt were singing their favourite duet), was a matter of debate and wager with some of the gayest of the young Belgians.

At the close of the second act, the lady stood up to her fullest height and breadth; and turning back her wreathed head and bright rolling eyes to the ambassador's box, she tapped the hand which was leaning over it with her fan. Sir Frederick started, and met the basilisk glances of Lady Dogherty, which literally transfixed him.

“I am inclined to raise an altar to chance, Sir Frederick,” she said, “since it's to it entirely we owe the pleasure of meeting you. I hope you are quite well; and Lady Frances, I hope she was quite well when you heard from her.”

The address, the inquiries, the accent, and the whole person of Lady Dogherty, drew the attention of the Montessor party, and of more than one English dandy and French *attaché*. Sir Frederick, whose exquisite apprehension of ridicule was never so wounded in its life-nerve, had neither the barbarity to *cut dead*, nor the tact to give in to the amusing absurdity; and he received most awkwardly the reproaches and compliments of his friend of the Dublin court-ball in the time of the Duke of Richmond.

At that moment, a loud yawn from Sir Ignatius (who had awakened as soon as the two charming vocalists had ceased to sing, and who was rubbing himself round with as unconscious an indulgence of his national movement as Monsieur *Sans-Gêne* in the French farce could have done,) excited a general laugh in the pit, accompanied by a murmur of disapprobation, at a gentleman (in

a box too that represented majesty) conversing with a female whose appearance would be scarcely tolerated in the *foyer* of Franconi. The well-known admonitory nudge of Lady Dogherty's elbow soon, however, recalled her husband; who, looking up into the face of Fegan's master, began an apology which filled up the measure of amazement to the young men in the box, and particularly to the Montessor party.

"It was my raal and intire intintion," he said, "to wait upon you, Sir Frederick Mottram, this very day, and apologize for the little accident last night, in regard to our frolic, in which Mr. Fegan was nowise to blame: for th'ale here, sir, is the most treacherous liquor that ever a man let pass the threshold of his lips; and a cratur as sober as a jidge gets disguised, before he knows whether it's table beer or bottled porthor he's drinking. And in respect of my shirt, sir, it was all a mistake; and I'm proud to own it before your frinds here, who might have got odd notions into their heads. For it seems, Sir Frederick, by what I hear tell, that you hadn't wore it a second day, before Mr. Fegan very politely had it washed, and put up in lavender, till he come to Brussels and give it to my wife's lady's-maid, who is there in the blue bonnet in the lattices above, with Mr. Fegan."

Every one laughed; while Sir Frederick, endeavouring to laugh too, was relieved from all further apologies by some one tapping him on the shoulder. He turned round and pushed back his chair to hail the welcome intruder; when Doctor Rodolf de Burgo, with his pert flashy air, and fine tigrish-dressed figure, stared him in the face. *C'était Gribouille, qui se jetait dans l'eau pour se sauver de la pluie.* The intrusion upon the sacred precincts of a private box (especially an ambassador's) was a shock followed up by the most provoking familiarity, indicating many more foregone conclusions of intimacy than the punctilious and reserved *London man* was willing to admit.

"How do, Sir Frederick? — but I need not ask you: you are looking a devilish deal better than when we parted *à l'impromptu*, owing to the Princess of Schaffenhhausen's sudden departure; she is so rapid in all her movements, and somehow we got involved — but here we are. I have been to see the citadel at Antwerp: magnificent! only returned an hour ago; just time to dress and dine."

Lord Montessor's star, shining on his tight-buttoned broad-breasted blue coat, caught the Doctor's quick eye, and he said—

“ Do introduce me to your friend ; I happen to be particularly intimate with a lady in whom he is very deeply interested.”

The rising of the curtain, and the universal ‘ *Chut !* ’ from all parts of the house, directed to the noisy box of the absent ambassador, produced the necessity for silence. Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty, who had been standing with their broad backs to the audience, and their broad faces to the party in the box, were now obliged to sit down ; while, to the utter annoyance of Sir Frederick, Doctor de Burgo drew the only unoccupied chair to the front of the box, between the Marquis and Lord Alfred, and, putting up his glass, recognised a number of Dublin, Cheltenham, and Brighton friends distributed through the house—all ‘ Pilgrims of the Rhine,’ the emptying of the day's diligences from Ostend and Calais.

The Doctor felt assured that, as far as the ‘ mere Irishry ’ went, his being seated next to a knight of the garter, in an ambassador's box, would bring him more professional distinction, than if he united the skill of Abernethy with the courtliness of Sir Henry ; and he was partly beginning a puff on the subject for the ‘ Pilot ’ and the ‘ Mail,’ (with both of which journals he corresponded,) and partly making up his mind to address the Marquis on a subject to which it was in the worst taste to allude, when the noble brothers arose and left the box, followed by the whole remaining English party : Sir Frederick had already escaped.

The Doctor, mortified to find himself alone and abandoned by the velvet friends whose personal acquaintance he so much coveted, arose, as if to follow, when the strong arm of Sir Ignatius caught the shining button of his coat. Wearied beyond all power of further endurance, and rising for the purpose of joining Fegan and the lady's-maid in the upper box, the Baronet had then first perceived the vicinity of his travelling physician ; and, irritated by heat, confinement, and listening, as he said, ‘ to a parcel of balderdash of which he did not understand a single iota,’ he revived all his lately cherished impressions of the airs and negligence of the Irish Apollo, who had moreover been two days absent during his employer's worst fit of bile, and fear of cholera. He now, therefore, exclaimed, without reference to time and place—

“ Why, thin, doctor, I am intirely amazed at your conduct, laving my lady and self in this outlandish place, without as much as ‘ God be with you,’ or ‘ Good bye kindly,’ or a powther to take, or a ditto repated, (shaking the bottle;) and Lady Dogherty all pimples, as if in the mazles, and as red as blazes; and myself with the weight of a smoothing-iron on the heart, and as blue as a blanket about the eyes; and wouldn’t wonder it’s a touch of the collara I’ve got, which you tould me was raging through the place. And, allow me to ax you, Doctor de Burgo, is it for looking after thim ould ruins at Antwerp that I am paying you two hundred a-year, and your board and lodging, and a sate in my own carriage, and other benefits for which I make no charge. . . .”

‘ *Chut! chut!*’ with other expressions of displeasure, were now echoed on every side, as the voice of Sir Ignatius rose with the rising of his choler, and disturbed the actors as well as the audience. Lady Dogherty, in an agony of feeling, which probably gave an additional muscular force to her arm, endeavoured to pull Sir Ignatius down into his seat. But Sir Ignatius, in the irritation of his excited feelings, was more than usually *récalcitrant* against her ladyship’s authority; and, without any previous acquaintance with the theory of dynamics, he hung the heavier on the Doctor’s button in proportion as he perceived the *nisus* on the uxorial side of the *fulcrum* to preponderate. The Doctor, on his part, was taken at a mechanical disadvantage; for, his person being tall and the front of the box low, the leverage was decided against him. What man could do, however, he did; and, like another Atlas, he sustained the double world of Sir Ignatius’s attractions and those of his lady, till, in an unlucky moment of increasing stress, the button of his coat, the pivot on which so many opposing forces turned, gave way. Lady Dogherty lost her centre of gravity; Sir Ignatius was dragged into the track of her eccentric movement, and, catching convulsively at the Doctor’s arm, shot him from the box with overwhelming force upon a *Com-mis voyageur*, who, thus impelled, rolled his German rotundity of person over the prostrate couple.

To have remonstrated in no very measured terms with the living projectile, would have been the immediate consequence of the *Com-mis* recovering his legs; but the agile De Burgo, a practised professor of callisthenic exercises, on feeling that the impulse he had so

unexpectedly acquired was hurrying him irrevocably into the yawning gulf beneath, seized the front of the balcony in his passage, and was thus enabled to drop quietly into the pit, without further injury. The pit door stood at hand invitingly open; and the Doctor, with an harlequin bound, which would have done credit to Eller, disappeared through the opening, and was seen no more.

At this moment a gendarme, drawn by the increasing clamour of the angry and astonished audience, made his appearance in the *balcon*. He approached Sir Ignatius, (who, once more having regained his feet, was beginning to show fight,) and with the utmost gentleness and civility requested the Baronet to accompany him out. Sir Ignatius mistook the *molliter manus imposuit* of the executive for an illegal arrest, and resisted the invitation with all his force, exclaiming,

“ Vous un fool, Monsir Policeman, vous un fool, if you think I haven’t more law in my head, than to let myself be arrested and sent to a furren jail, for nothing at all, at all ! ”

“ *Soyez tranquille,* ” said the gendarme, drawing him gently on ; “ *soyez tranquille.* ”

“ Sorrow step I’ll stir, sir, good or bad, till you show me your warrant, ” said Sir Ignatius.

“ *Oui, oui, Monsieur le Grand Connétable,* ” cried Lady Dogherty ; “ *où est votre lettre de cachet ?* ”

“ Isn’t it mighty hard, ” continued Sir Ignatius, appealing to the bystanders, “ that an Irish nobleman, and magistrate of Shanballymac, can’t spake to his own thravelling physician, without being taken up like a pickpocket, in the face of a furren audience ? ”

Lady Dogherty, half affecting a faint, though not sorry to make a sensation, now bestowed her entire French vocabulary on the young *Commis*, whom she endeavoured to interest in the cause of outraged hospitality and violated gallantry ; but the phlegmatic German, who had visited the theatre for the express purpose of comparing the orchestra and vocal strength of the Brussels company with those of the free and noble city of Frankfort, had been incensed and annoyed, past all bearing, by the frequent interruptions his critical acumen had received, through the various nonconformities of Sir Ignatius and his better half ; and to her pathetic appeals he made no other answer than a frequent iteration of,

“ *Comment, matam! Que fouler fous! fotre cafalier est un tapacheur. Il m’a gâté mon opéra, lui.* ”

Meantime the gendarme continued his gentle but persevering efforts—“ *Je vous invite toujours de sortir, monsieur,* ” he said; and step by step he drew him towards the door of the *balcon*: but on gaining the lobby, he was himself suddenly seized by the collar, and hurled round with such force, that he reeled against the opposite wall; while Fegan, (by whose *geste et fait* this assault was perpetrated,) rushing forward, took Sir Ignatius under the arm, and brandishing a short stick, roared out,

“ Shall I kill him dead, Sir Ignatius? — shall I, sir? — say the word, the dirty furren polisman! Does he know you’re the sitting magistrate of Shanballymac? Does he know who you are, at all, at all? Here, my leedy. Honor me with your leedyship’s arum. Your leedyship’s carridge is up and waiting at the blackguard door below.”

Lady Dogherty, trembling, accepted the proffered arm; Sir Ignatius followed raging; and Fegan, flourishing his stick, was clearing a way for them through the crowd, when they were met by the officer of the guard, who demanded which was the offender that had assaulted the gendarme.

Two Belgian gentlemen pointed to Fegan, observing at the same time that it was a great outrage.

“ Outrage! ” said one of a group of vulgar Englishmen, who were beginning to take a part in the fray. “ The outrage is on your part, messieurs. If a gentleman is to be insulted by a gendarme for talking to a friend in an adjoining box, the sooner we English get away from the protection of this republican government the better.”

“ I should like to know,” said another, “ what the Orange king could have done worse than this, or what the English papers will say of it.”

“ So much for mob governments,” said a third; “ the magistrates are afraid to put the laws in force against the people.”

To all these sarcasms, which were not followed up by any overt act in behalf of the prisoner, the Belgian officer made no reply: a moderation which may be explained by his not having understood a word that was said: for the dialogue had been carried on partly

in English, and partly in no-French. With considerable politeness he endeavoured to persuade Sir Ignatius to follow his lady into their carriage, and to leave Fegan in his charge ; assuring him that every justice should be done by the prisoner.

Fegan, meantime, was marched off amidst a file of soldiers. The awful aspect of an armed force had electrified his imagination to a degree that no symbol of civil power could have effected. Pale and subdued, he made no further resistance ; for that courage which would have stood firm against an array of thousands of his fierce countrymen, on the heights of Cappoquin, or in the ravines of the Galties, was in perfect abeyance before the bayonets of a disciplined soldiery.

It required the sedative powers of half a hundred of Ostend oysters, of two carafes of Alambique, qualified by a tumbler of Cognac and water, to tranquillize the irritation of Sir Ignatius, and to soothe the nervous emotion of Lady Dogherty. They had found the supper ready, according to order, at the Bellevue ; such a supper as, in the good old times of Ireland, was as indispensable after a party to the play, as an epilogue to a new comedy, or a ‘ raking pot of tay ’ after a county ball.

L’homme en mangeant remonte ses ressorts ; and the supper discussed, Sir Ignatius and his lady began to see the affair which had at first terrified them in another and better point of view. The person carried off and imprisoned by the armed force, was the confidential own gentleman of one of the first men in England, a Privy Counsellor, an M.P., who would doubtless ‘ make a Star-chamber business of it,’ bring it before the Parliament, perhaps ; and, in all cases, the names of Mottram and Dogherty would appear together in the public papers. The necessity of calling on Sir Frederick the first thing in the morning, to procure his protection and assistance, was therefore the practical result of this speculation.

Lady Dogherty, though she felt all the advantage of such a coincidence, had yet ‘ a silent sorrow ’ preying on her heart, which stood apart from all other grievances—the recent desertion of Doctor de Burgo ; and she gave but a divided attention to the apostrophes of her husband in honour of the prowess and gallantry of Fegan, the object which seemed at present uppermost in his mind.

“ Och ! he’s a chip of the ould block,” said Sir Ignatius, in a

sudden burst of emotion, called forth by a second glass of brandy and water, and the recapitulation of Fegan's noble defence. "He's a chip of the ould block! And now, Kitty dear, did ever you see an handsomer fellow, or a taller, than Larry Fegan? and a pair of shoulders that would flank a martillo tower. I remember the day when the wild-goose flyers* of Kerry would have given any money for such a lad for th' ould King of Prussia. And when it is known who and what he is, this little ruction may be the making of him; and wouldn't wonder"

Sir Ignatius here looked earnestly and steadily at Lady Dogherty, as if he had a confidence to make which would require all her indulgent sympathies; but he looked in vain. Lady Dogherty's bright eyes were suffused with tears. Exhaustion, fright, oysters, ale, the vulgar indiscretions of her ill-assorted mate, the conduct of Rodolf de Burgo, were all weighing heavily on her heart or—her digestion; and having thrown herself back in her chair, with her handkerchief to her face, she was indulging in a 'luxury of woe,' to which the monotonous mutterings of her husband gave no interruption. Confiding however in her silent attention, Sir Ignatius filled his glass and continued,

"And now, Lady Dogherty dear, that this poor lad has risked his life for us in a furren land, and lies in jail this blessed moment for our sakes, and the honor of ould Ireland, and has proved himself a brave boy and an honor to the father that—which I may say, Kitty dear, is coming to the point,—and—which—while—that is, ma'am!—for youth is youth; and the greatest man in Ireland has had his frolic out, and in that respect I am not worse than my bethers; as you who knows Ireland, and what we Mallow boys were in thim ould times, and Rory Karney, of Fort Karney, your uncle, who was called Hell-fire Karney, can tell. Sure hadn't he his pickidillies, your own kith and kin?—and istn't the lad that was well known to be a bit of a byblow, young Roderick Karney, a gineral in the Austrian service, and a Count? which shows that I was no ways particlar in regard of poor Larry, called Fegan, after his mother's maiden name, alias Betty Burke.

* The name by which the crimps of the King of Prussia were known in Ireland, where they used to recruit for giants for his service.

“And so, Lady Dogherty, on my bended knees, ma’am,” (and he ‘suited the action to the word’) “I here, as if you were my pathron saint, declare and confess, to my great sin and shame, and *mia maximá culpá*, that Larry is my firstborn óf two fine lumps of twins by the said Betty Burke, alias Fegan. If you will just pardon this trifling bit of a piccadilly, committed years before I had the high honor of making you Lady Dogherty, and marrying into the Fort Karney family, I declare to Jasus, and ’pon my word of honor as a gentleman, and a barinite, that I’ll be true and loyal to your wedded love and bed and board, from this time out, now and evermore, amen.”

Lady Dogherty, in an amazement that dried her maudlin tears on her crimson cheek, let fall her handkerchief, and gazing on her prostrate penitent, exclaimed—

“What is it you are after telling me, Sir Ignatius? Lawrence Fegan your son! your illegitimate child!”

“Sorrow word of a lie in it!” said Sir Ignatius, folding his brawny hands over his lady’s knees: “I had my misgivings from the first time I saw him before the *jidge de pay* at Ostend. Big, bare, and naked, as he stood there, I felt my bowels yearn towards him.”

“And did he know of the relationship?” said Lady Dogherty, in a tone of deep mortification: “does Sir Frederick know that your natural son is his valet-de-chambre?”

“Sorrow know he knows! for the poor lad has kept the sacret, ever since he saw me by chance walking in that wild-baste garden in London, and says he followed us often, but wouldn’t bring shame on me, nor himself neither: for it’s he has the raal spurrit of a gintleman, not all as one as the Doctor, and would sooner beg the world than axe me for a tinpinny, after I throwning him on the *Shaughraun*, and never giving him bit nor sup, or trade to live by, sinner that I am! And if it wasn’t that it was a little hearty we got together last night, at a nate little tay-house, or shebeen, a taste out of the town, ma’am, (where we met by accident, and made our kermish and our *staminay* together, as they say in German) the divel an iota I’d have known of it yet, only by guess; and never saw the cratur since he was the height of a Munster potato.”

“But,” said Lady Dogherty, perplexed in the extreme by a sense

of all the inconveniences and embarrassments which might arise from this discovery, "how do you know that he is really your son?"

"Know it! why, isn't he as like me as if I had spit him out of my mouth? Isn't he six feet high in his stocking feet? and hasn't he the look of a lord, if lords weren't such little *leprahauns* as they are now,—to say nothing of Priest Murphy's certificate of his birth, which he has on his person; for he was the mother's darling, in regard of his luck in coming an hour before th' other poor donny garlogh, whom she tuck up to the Foundling in Dublin."

"There are two of them, then!" cried Lady Dogherty, raising her hands and eyes in dismay.

"There *were* two of them, sure enough, Kitty dear," said Sir Ignatius, taking her hands tenderly, and kissing them with propitiating gallantry, and an ill-concealed smile of triumph.

"I hope I don't intrude," said a voice from the half-opened door. "By Jupiter!—*a scena!* I trust I am included in the general amnesty; for as I am the offended, the injured, the insulted person, I of course am the person to cry *peccavi*."

"It doesn't signify what you cry, Doctor de Burgo," said Sir Ignatius, rising from his knees, and wiping the dust from his best black pantaloons, equally ashamed of the humble position in which he had been discovered at his wife's feet, and enraged at the easy assurance of his travelling physician; "it does not signify whether you cry *copaivi* or not; for you and I must part, Doctor de Burgo, and the sooner the bether."

"With all my heart, Sir Ignatius," said the Doctor, ringing for a relay of oysters and a bottle of wine; "but let us part friends. The munificent offer I have received here, the prevalence of *cholera*, of which the foreign physicians know nothing, the certainty of being made state physician to my old acquaintance Leopold the First (to whose *soirées* I went at Marlborough-house), and, above all, the charming valetudinarian, the Marchioness of Montessor being expected every moment in Brussels—(you saw her husband and brother in the box with me; he with the star on my left was the Marquis;)—add to this, my interest with Sir Frederick Mottram, and the probable return to office of our party; and you, at least, Lady Dogherty, who know the world, will allow that to accompany

you to the Brunnens of Germany, would, in a worldly consideration, be a great sacrifice. I do not say that certain feelings, Lady Dogherty, will not wrench from the heart ties, '*which, breaking, break it,*' but Sir Ignatius's conduct. . . ."

The Doctor paused, and fixed his eyes on Lady Dogherty. Sir Ignatius was already mixing for himself another tumbler, and listened patiently to this rigmarole, of which 'the raging cholera' was to him a cabalistical phrase. Lady Dogherty, who could upon occasions quarter the dramatic gentility of Lady Teazle with the royalty of Queen Dollalolla, drew up to her fullest height, and gently pushing away the tumbler of brandy and water from before her husband, said, with emphasis,—

"Doctor de Burgo, while under the influence of feelings as violent as they are agitating, allow Sir Ignatius and myself to withdraw, and to defer all further discussion on the unfortunate events of this eventful evening till to-morrow. Oh! sir! may your night's reflections bring with your morning's convictions a proper sense of your very improper error, and a sincere sorrow for the neglect of all those finer feelings, which, as the poet says, 'fills the happiest breast.' "

"Amen! " said Sir Ignatius, gently stealing back the tumbler, which his wife again pushed away; while she added, in an emphatic tone,—

"All I entreat of you is, Doctor, that you will take no step till you hear from Sir Ignatius and myself, at breakfast to-morrow morning; till then, farewell!

'And if for ever,
Then for ever fare thee well.' "

"I cannot part with you in anger, dear Lady Dogherty," said the Doctor, in a tone as dramatic and sentimental as her own; "and if Sir Ignatius can forgive himself——"

"Is it me?" interrupted Sir Ignatius, softened to childish tenderness by his recent confession, by the 'tumblers' he had already taken, and his desire for the one he had not yet tasted; "Is it me? Divel a bit but I forgive every one; and have enough to be forgiven myself, as Lady Dogherty knows, and will tell you, Doctor. . . ."

“ Enough of that for to-night !” said Lady Dogherty, taking his arm in a manner that obliged him to rise.

“ Aisy now, aisy, Kitty dear,” he cried, as she forced him from his chair : “ to cut the matter short, the Doctor and I’ll just take a tumbler to our making up ; not forgetting poor Lawrence Fegan, now lodged in the watch-house for all our sakes.”

De Burgo, taking a hint from Lady Dogherty’s eyes, replied — “ Not to-night, Sir Ignatius, if you please ; it is enough that we part friends. Good night, dear Lady Dogherty ! We shall meet, I suppose, at breakfast : allow me to open the door !”

There was a little struggle on the part of Sir Ignatius to remain ; and still, as his lady dragged him forth, he cast a ‘ longing, lingering look behind,’ at the tumbler of untasted brandy and water, until she at last forcibly effected his exit, and the Doctor closed the door.

Lady Dogherty trembled for the discretion and paternal vanity of Sir Ignatius, and resolved to make his silence on the discovery of a relationship at once so immoral and so disgraceful the purchase of his forgiveness for wrongs, and an infidelity which, like a ‘ coming event,’ had ‘ cast its shadow before,’ over the bright surface of their conjugal life.

A dish of oysters, a bottle of Burgundy, (entered, as soon as served, on the increasing bill of the Irish baronet,) soon banished from the Doctor’s mind his muddled patient and his maudlin patroness. More than ever annoyed by their vulgarity and absurdity, and ambitious to rise in a world for whose suffrages he had so many qualifications, he was resolved on cutting the connexion altogether as soon as anything adequate to the salary he enjoyed, and the advantages he reaped from it, should present itself. He thought the arrest of Fegan was a fair ground of appeal to the anti-continental prejudices of the tory ex-minister, and of the Lords Montessor, and a sufficient excuse for paying them an early visit on the following morning. With a true Irish imagination that was easily mounted to extravagant speculation, he drank and dreamed, and dreamed and drank, till he saw himself in prospect all that he had boasted of already being to Sir Ignatius,—the boon companion of Englishmen of rank and fashion, the Struensee of the Belgian court, if not of some higher power.

He looked round him for a female autocrat, some Catherine of Russia, some Christine or Matilda, or even for a Maria Theresa. But there were no queens *régnantes* at hand to raise him ; though women were the levers by which he hoped to attain to greatness. He thought, however, of Donna Maria di Gloria, and fell asleep over his last glass of Burgundy with her image uppermost in his mind. Visions of advancement still floated round his head. He slept ; but (the elements of his previous thoughts combining in all the fervour and vivacity of his waking expectations), train after train of gratified vanity and ambition succeeded in gay and dazzling sequence, till all vanished in the person of Donna Maria di Gloria ; who, taking the form of Lady Dogherty in a wreath of roses and green velvet gown, gave him her awful ‘ good night ’ in No. 144, Hôtel de Bellevue.

From any other form than that, his firm nerves would not have shrunk ; but even in sleep her bulky Ladyship had now become his *bête noire*. Roused therefore from his night-mare by the apparition, he started on his legs, emptied the carafe of water upon the table, and taking one of the nearly extinguished wax-lights, retreated to his bedroom, singing, as he passed the chamber of Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty,

“ A rose-tree in full bearing ,
With sweet flowers fair to see,
One rose beyond comparing,
For beauty attracted me.”

While Sir Ignatius lay snoring, the well-known words and voice fell upon Lady Dogherty’s ear. She was seated before her writing desk, pouring forth her feelings on a sheet of bright yellow musk-scented paper, which, in the form of a letter, she was addressing to her dear friend,

“ LAURA LADY DICKENSON, ROSE COTTAGE, CHELTENHAM.

“ Hôtel de Bellevue, midnight.

‘ Tired Nature’s sweet restorer, balmy Sleep,
He like the world [the Doctor] his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles ; the wretched he forsakes ;
Swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsullied by a tear.’

YOUNG’S *Night Thoughts*.

“ And oh ! at this ‘ witching hour of the night ’ may *he*, my dearest Laura, shed his choicest poppies on the eyes of my sweet friend, while mine overflow with tears, and ache with unrequited kindness. While all are asleep in the Bellevue, (certainly the most fashionable hotel in Europe,) and ‘ leave the world to darkness and to me,’ your Kate keeps dreary vigils.

“ But, to continue my journal : after I had sealed and sent my last packet from the Tirlemont, by Mr. O’Reilly (a friend of the Doctor’s), I removed to this truly splendid establishment, where I had the pleasure of again meeting my dear friend the Right Honorable Lady Anastasia Macanulty, lately married to one of the most perfect Adonises I ever beheld (as far as person goes, though with perhaps too strong an accent for my fastidious ears). She is still in her honeymoon, though not exactly in her *première jaunisse*. Sir Ignatius, who knows every one, thinks Mr. W. Macanulty is one of the King’s County Macanulties ; and that he has claims upon the patronage of an illustrious and gallant gay Lothario, who, in the words of the poet—

‘ — Wide as his command
Scatter’d his Maker’s image through the land !’

“ Be that as it may, he has been lately appointed a commissioner for inquiring into the state of Ireland, past, present, and to come ; and is now travelling, *via* Brussels, to the flowery shores of the Rhine, whence he proceeds to Vienna for the winter (Lady Anastasia’s cousin being expected to be ambassador there). They dine

with us every day at the *table d'hôte*, which is the fashion here for persons of the highest rank. The Doctor and Mr. W. Macanulty are inseparables. They have been at Antwerp together to see the ruins : but of that hereafter. It is with unfeigned delight I have been of use to dear Lady Anastasia, as they came off before their carriage was finished, and mine is always at her service. In return, she has introduced me to many of the fine people here—all passing through : so that I shall have my circle ready formed at Baden-Baden ; and should I induce Sir Ignatius to visit Vienna, the advantages of this connexion will be incalculable.

“ Why, my beloved friend, are you not here to partake of them ? We have also the Dowds and the Doolans of county Wexford, and the Smiths of Grouse Lodge, Tipperary, the Reilleys, the Rands, the Roystons, and others of our Cheltenham and Brighton set of last season ; also the three East Indian families who are going for their livers to the Brunnens. The Marquis of Montessor and his brother Lord Alfred, who are waiting for the Marchioness and a large party of English fashionables, are in the Bellevue. Of course we shall be introduced to them all by our new, and certainly much obliged friend, Sir Frederick Mottram.

“ Not that we have much to boast of from his gratitude. I wrote you word what imminent services we rendered him at Ostend ; offering him our purse and table, and lent him our linen (some of which was only returned to us here) ; and would have taken him into our carriage and travelled with him to Germany : but from the time we parted with him on the ramparts of Ostend, we have never set eyes on him till this evening, at the play. He sent his card, indeed, to our hotel yesterday, and perhaps really meant to be civil as soon as he had settled himself, as he has every right to be. But he certainly is one of the haughtiest and most reserved men I ever met with ; which is the more ridiculous, because he turns out to be a low-born person, the son of a Birmingham manufacturer, and come of people that, in Ireland, would not be admitted into high society at all. I should like to see Sir Ignatius's ancestors, or his cousin the general Sir Shane, who proved his thirty-two quarters at Vienna, associating with a tradesman's son. I say nothing of the Kearneys of Fort Kearney, or my mother's family, the Fogartys of Castle Fogarty. And yet these are the men who look

down on the Irish gentry, with the best blood of the country in their veins ! What will greatly amaze you, is that his mother was an actress, and never could be received at court by the late Queen.

“ But the pen of your friend runs away with her. Can you blame me, Laura sweetest, for thus ‘ drinking oblivion to my woes ? ’ You will ask me, what woes ? Blessed with rank, title, fortune, a person still in its prime, though touched with the green and yellow hues of melancholy ; which, as our friend the Doctor (*our* friend—oh, Laura !) used to say, is but ‘ the scabbard eating away the sword.’ How often has he said to you in our moonlight walks, under the shady trees of Montpellier buildings, at Cheltenham, ‘ Dearest Lady D., if you could prevail on your susceptible friend to cease to feel, she would then cease to suffer ! ’ But, ‘ paired, not matched,’ with one whose ancient family and liberal fortune scarcely compensate for the want of all that ‘ something more exquisite still,’ (as our national bard has it,)—that reciprocity of sentiments and sensations which makes the charm of connubial felicity,—I had hoped to have found in Doctor Rodolf de Burgo a Platonic friend, an instructive Mentor, a constant companion, a literary colleague, and a vigilant as well as skilful physician. But I tremble to confess to you,—to myself,—that I have been disappointed.

“ Devoted as he was in Brighton, his conduct here has been cold, careless, and neglectful. He has been running after great people, to the perfect forgetfulness of his true friends. He was first led away by a German Princess from Ostend to Brussels ; and it was not till after a visit of an hour long, that we discovered it was her German maid we were talking to, the Princess herself having gone alone to visit her estates between Brussels and Namur. Since then, he has been taken up by young W. Macanulty ; and though he knows Sir Ignatius’s horror of the cholera, and that my delicate and only remaining lung requires constant attention, he ran away two days to Antwerp without saying a word, and appeared first on his return in the French Ambassador’s box, with his new and assuredly *very great friends*, the Marquis of Montessor and Sir Frederick Mottram, with several other persons of fashion of his acquaintance.

“ This so provoked Sir Ignatius, that he took him to task very roundly, and more loudly, perhaps, than the stupid habits of these

vulgar Belgians permit (for they *are* the vulgarest dawdles you ever beheld ; the women cased up to their chins in habit-shirts, and washing muslins, with little bonnets and hats, and the men not dressing at all for the theatre). The result was terrible ! A fracas ensued. Sir Frederick's own gentleman and private secretary, a sort of *attaché*, who came to our assistance, was seized by a *lettre de cachet* (such as you have read of in French novels), and thrown into a dungeon ! Sir Ignatius and myself were only saved by our rank and titles, and the effects produced by our carriage with the arms of the Doghertys and the bloody hand, and that of the Kearneys in the middle on a scutcheon of Pretence, which waited at the door, as Sir William Betham has proved. Pray read this to your radical friend, Mr. Wittingham, who is such a stickler for the Belgian revolution, if he is still at Cheltenham when you arrive there.

“ The Doctor, the cause of all this, got out of the way, and never made his appearance till after supper. Words have not power to express the indignation I felt ; though never did I see him look more bewitching ; his face a little flushed, and his customary black suit set off with a cherry-colour and gold tabinet waistcoat, as Hamlet says, which I got over from O'Donnel's in Dublin, as a *cadet* for him, the day before we left Brighton. Sir Ignatius's too, too easy temper was yielding to De Burgo's pleading eloquence, when I carried him off from the voice of the charmer, whom, I must say, we left overwhelmed with deep emotion at the thought of parting from us.

“ I write this, dearest Laura, ere ‘ sleep knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,’ to beg you will write him such a letter as will make him feel how blind he is to his own interests, and how unworthy of your (may I say ?) maternal interest in him—ah, Laura !

“ And now, sweetest, good night ! Lady Anastasia sends this early in the morning by the ambassador's bag, which leaves no time for adding more than that I am, to my heart's last beat,

“ My dearest Laura's ever devoted,
though perhaps too susceptible,

“ KATE.”

CHAPTER XX.DÉPÔT D'ARCHIVES, AND THE LIBRARY OF THE DUKES
DE BOURGOGNE.

THE results of the *fracas* at the theatre brought with them, if not disappointment, at least another issue than had entered into the calculations of the several parties concerned. The designs of Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty, the speculations of Dr. De Burgo, the apprehensions of Fegan, and the prophecies of the English lookers-on at the box entrance, all alike fell before the wise views of the Belgian authorities, who treated the smallest disturbances of public tranquillity with a delicacy rendered necessary by the circumstances of the revolution. Instead of making the most of the outrage, and exhibiting an uncalled-for display of what public functionaries in the older governments are so fond of calling 'vigour,' and the 'vindication of law,' they suffered the affair to die quietly away. In all that concerned the English and French visitors at the Belgian capital, there was a special desire to act with particular prudence; so that, while they leaned lightly on the subjects of states with which the national interests were so closely bound, they might avoid irritating the rather susceptible jealousy of the populace, who, in the novelty of their recently acquired independence, are perhaps something too suspicious of foreign influence.

On the ensuing morning, accordingly, Fegan was liberated, on a promise, backed by his word of honour, of keeping the peace while he remained at Brussels; and on making an apology, founded on the irresistible influence of Faro, to the aggrieved gendarme. The officer on guard waited on Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty at their hotel, accompanied by a friend, to act as interpreter; and after explaining to them the tenacity of a Brussels audience, where a favourite opera or singer was concerned, presented them a ticket for an amateur concert.

Sir Ignatius was stunned by a courtesy so unexpected.

“A ticket for a concert, Lady Dogherty,” he said, “when it’s a challenge I expected, which would have seen the upshot of such a frock-caw as ours in the Thaytre Royal of Dublin; where, if you only brush by a chap’s *surtout*, it’s ‘Here’s my card, sir; I’ll trouble you for yours!’”

“You see, Sir Ignatius” said Lady Dogherty, drawing up, “the value of the title, you were at first so reluctant to assume, and from which you have derived such incalculable benefits.”

“Why, thin, sorrow much!” muttered Sir Ignatius; “only being obliged to pay three-and-sixpence for but-ends of wax candles, when mowlds would have served our turn just as well, and better.”

“In foreign countries,” continued Lady Dogherty, “the claims of high rank are always acknowledged with due deference and respect!”

“Why, thin, ’pon my daisy” said Sir Ignatius, “I’d back Ireland ’gainst the world, in regard of its respect for quality, and titles too.”

While the Doghertys thus consoled themselves for the indignities of the previous night by the alchymy of their *amour-propre*, the party most concerned by Fegan’s last indiscretion was Sir Frederick Mottram. The non-appearance of his servant had obliged him to close rather hastily with a French *valet-de-chambre*, who, with a German courier, were, before midday, installed in his antechamber at the Hôtel de Flandre. He was himself deep in letter-writing, *à porte fermée*, when his Frenchman presented him with the following note:—

“TO SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM, BART.

“SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM,—Sir, I take lave to permise that you and I must part after what has happened last night at the play-house, in which I was noways to blame, but would have been the manest-spurited of spalpeens, if I had stood by, and seen them insultin a leedy, let alone an ancient Irish nobleman by seed, breed, and discent, like Sir Ignatius and my lady. To say nothing, Sir Frederick, of its coming out who and what I am, being a gentle-

man bred and born by the father's side ; the same being now hereby sartified by Sir Ignatius himself ; which would make it neither convanient nor dacent that I should remain any longer in your honor's service.

“ Who am, Sir Frederick,

“ Your most obed. servant,

“ LAWRENCE FEGAN DOGHERTY. ”

“ P.-S. Anyhow, Sir Frederick, I should have discharged you, in respect of your taking in an underhand manner the furrin violet, who I will give your honor's kays to, and other wearables, being two dozen of new, Ostend, Holland shirts, til th' others comes over with the thravelling carridge ; which, with th' invantaries of white cambrick French pocket-handkerchiefs, the pistols, tellyscope, and other apparel, your new dressing *necessaire* and *O de Colown*, (two cases included,) and various articles, some in silver, and some in gold, bought yesterday in the *Minuet de la Cure*,* I will deliver up, and wait your honor's commands for that same.

“ I am, sir, yours faithfully,

“ L. F. D———.”

This letter was as great a puzzle to Sir Frederick, as the billet-doux of ‘Cousin Con’ to Tony Lumpkin : ‘it was all buzz.’ That Fegan had again got into a drunken broil at the theatre, and was lodged in durance vile, he had learned from the servants of the hotel ; and he had already made up his mind to leave him to his merited and, perhaps, salutary punishment ; and afterwards to send him back to England, with a handsome compensation for his recent services, and for his former sufferings. But, in all other respects, the letter was an hieroglyphic ; the production of a mind still stupified by a recent fit of beastly inebriety. The shortest way of unriddling it, was to call in the writer ; which he forthwith did.

Sir Frederick was struck by his air and appearance, on entrance. His manner was easy to insolence ; and his high white shirt-collar, black silk stock, and head fresh from the hands of the most fashionable *coiffeur* of the Rue de la Madeleine, gave him such a resem-

* Probably *Montagne de la Cour*.

blance to Dr. De Burgo, that for a moment his master was the dupe of the illusion. A bow, still respectful, and an erect position at the door (with the lock of which he fiddled in evident emotion), replaced the flash dandy in his old character of *valet-de-chambre* of Ostend; though it left no trace of the grotesque wretchedness of the porter's *locum tenens* at Carlton-terrace.

“What does this mean, pray?” said Sir Frederick, with his cold high manner, as he held up the epistle.

“Plaze your honor, Sir Frederick, it's what it manes, that it is intirely out of my power to have the pleasure of keeping with you any longer, Sir Frederick; and so, sir, I thought it was most genteelst to cut at once.”

“If it only means that,” said Sir Frederick, while he wrote an order upon his banker, “it is well: I intended to part with you this day. Your incorrigible neglect, frequent absences, dissipated habits, summed up by the very unpleasant scrape you got into last night, which might have involved me in its disagreeable consequences, had brought me to this conclusion.”

“Why, thin, I'd have been railly sorry for that, Sir Frederick. But sure, sir, I put it to your honor's self—long life to you!—that set a case, that your own honored father was unsulted, and my leedy, his wife, by a dirty griddle-cake-faced furren polisman, forenent a whole playhouse, wouldn't you like to be after taking the dust out of his coat, Sir Frederick? And sure it isn't because a man has oncet fallen into throuble, and has been obligated to put on a livery, that he isn't to have the spurrit of a man; and he, above all, sir, an Irishman, and a gintleman by kith and kin and relationship; and the son of a barrynite, like yourself—and no offence, I hope, your honor. For, plaze your honor, I am warranted, and permitted, and sartified, to tell you, sir, by Sir Ignatius's own self, that I am his own son naturally born, and eldest heir, if I had the law on my side, and only offspring to inherit his fine fortune: and that is the truth, and the whole truth; only hopes your honor will say nothing to nobody about it yet, and 'bove all, to my lady and the Dochter, till we get back to Mount Dogherty Shanballymac, and gets rid of the Dochter intirely, who gives himself the divel's own airs, saving your prisence, Sir Frederick; and it's heartily sick my father, Sir Ignatius, is of him.”

“ Oh ! ” said Sir Frederick, struggling almost vainly with the laugh that was rising to his lip ; “ you are, then, the natural son of Sir Ignatius Dogherty ? ”

“ Troth I am, Sir Frederick, ” he replied, releasing the handle of the door, which he had nearly twisted off ; and drawing up to his full height, as he arranged his black cravat, he added with a flush of pride—“ His raal lawful and natural son ; and I hope he will never have cause to be ashamed of me, for I am as much above doing a dirty thing, sir, as the greetest man in the land ; and if iver, owing to your honor’s goodness and purtection, and greet interest with the King and others, and my father Sir Ignatius’s long purse, I should have the honor of serving his Majesty agin, (and I would prefer the Couldstrames afore the world,) I would show them furreners, as my half-brother Jeemes Burke, by another father, did at Watherloo, that I could fight my way to glory, and get my medal, as well as any man in the Duke of Wellington’s army. ”

While the kindling imagination and military ardour of Lawrence Fegan was thus ‘ plucking up drowning honour by the locks,’ Sir Frederick, with his head almost touching the paper on which he was affecting to write, muttered an occasional, “ Well,—so—.” At length he addressed the orator more directly, and added, “ I wish you well ; but in the mean time accept this : it is an order on my banker for a hundred pounds ; part of it is due to you, I suppose ; and the rest pray accept as a trifling compensation for the accident you met with, in my service, some years back. ”

“ You owe me nothing at all, at all, Sir Frederick, ” said Fegan, bowing in his best way, and flourishing his hat. “ I meed no agreement with you, sir, about stetion or weges, only just the high honor of being about you, to the great amazement of the servants’ hall and steward’s room, and no thanks to thim : and was too proud to have the honor to be so useful to you on your thravels, which I’ll never forget : and if I accept this money at all, Sir Frederick, ”—and he bowed again, as he took the draft and folded it up,—“ it isn’t as weges ; I’d be very sorry, troth ; only just as a keepsake from your honor, in regard of th’ould times ; ”—(Fegan put the back of his gloved hand to his eyes, and, after a moment’s silence, added,) “ and not forgetting the greet fun at Bruges, and the fine merry old nun, long life to her ! And will keep this note, if it were double as

much, to buy a murning ring for your honor; and wishes you, and my lady, and young Mr. Emilius, every happiness in life, and a happy death, I pray Jasus—Amen!”

Sir Frederick had risen with an air of impatience; he waved his hand, with a half courteous “I wish you well;” and Fegan, with his deepest Irish sigh, and most improved Flemish bow, backed out.

He was already in the ante-room, when, suddenly turning on his steps, he again stept forward and said, “I forgot to mention to your honor, that before I went to the play last night, there came some cards, a letter, and an elegant little donny garland of daffy-down-dillies: you’ll find them all in the teeble-drawer, Sir Frederick, there, forenent you, sir. Allow me, your honor.”

The cards were those of the French and English Ambassadors, of Sir Frederick’s Polish friend, Col. P——, together with those of one or two English acquaintances who had seen his arrival in the papers. The garland was labelled ‘*De la part de Janssens père:*’ and the note was from Monsieur E——, his obliging banker. It ran thus:—

“It has been signified to Monsieur E——, by Madame Marguerite, that the antiquarian tastes of Sir Frederick Mottram would be much gratified by a visit to the ‘Library of the Dukes of Burgundy,’ and to the ‘*Dépôt des Archives Beligiques.*’ Monsieur E—— has been enabled to appoint a meeting for this day, between the hours of twelve and four, with the learned gentlemen at the head of these rich departments. Mons. E—— hopes to be able to give Sir Frederick rendezvous; but, at all events, encloses two notes of introduction.”

The one of these notes was addressed to ‘*Mons. Marchal, Conservateur de la Bibliothèque Royale des Ducs de Bourgogne;*’ the other, to ‘*Mons. Gachard, Archiviste du Royaume.*’

These memorials of other times, and the recurrence to a name which seemed always to hang like a charm with all that was connected with the poetry of life, swept away from Sir Frederick Mottram’s recollection every record of the absurdities with which he had been engaged a moment before. Without, therefore, waiting for Monsieur E——, and guided by his courier to the *Dépôt des Archives*, he hastened to escape the risk of a reproof from Madame Marguerite (should he meet her), of being always *en arrière* with time and circumstances.

The Dépôt of the Archives of Belgium lies in a very Spanish quarter of Brussels. It occupies that part of the Palace of Justice which commands *la Place du Grand Sablon*; a locality which, though it unites many inconveniences both of space and distribution, is, from its antiquity, a not inappropriate site for perhaps the most precious moral remains of ancient Europe.

To obtain access to such documents was, in the olden times, an exclusive privilege of royalty, or a favour granted by special protection. In Brabant, the Grand Council alone could grant leave to inspect the charters and state papers of the province; and it often only named one of its own members, or the *procureur-général*, to make search through the *garde-charte* for the particular date or fact required.

When the provinces which now constitute the kingdom of the Belgians were separate and independent, and were governed by their counts and dukes, or by their republican corporations, each had its own distinct archives, or, as they were called, *trésoreries de leurs chartes*; which, for security, were often concealed behind the altars of their churches, or guarded in the strongholds of their fortified castles. In these several dépôts were preserved, from the earliest ages of the social existence of the people, records of public acts concerning the privileges, domains, and possessions of the reigning houses; title-deeds and charters, foreign treaties, and ordinances for the internal government of the country; with other documents of a more municipal and even domestic character: rich items for the history of mankind, preserved for the use of a future and a better day.

As far back as the thirteenth century, Brabant, Flanders, Limbourg, Artois, Hainault, Namur, Luxembourg, etc. etc. had their several archives. The marriage of Marguerite Countess of Flanders with the Duke of Burgundy, in introducing a new dynasty and a new order of things, made no change in this disposition. The brave, the enlightened, the spirited Philippe-le-Bon, who united so many of these provinces under his dominion, left their precious deposits where he found them. From this time, however, the state archives were deposited in the castles of Rupelmonde, or of Lille: often, too, they were sent to the treasury of the Dukes of Burgundy, at Dijon. Under Maximilian and Philippe-le-Beau, they were still kept

in the two first-named fortresses. It was in the reign of Charles the Fifth, that state papers first began to be preserved in Brussels; but the old collections still were left in their ancient depositories.

In the troubles of the sixteenth century, so fatal to Belgium, and so favourable to every species of plunder, many of the ancient records were carried off by particular individuals for their own purposes;* and, during the whole Spanish regime, nothing was done for their conservation. Maria Theresa, who, in her dull, maternal despotism, neither respected, nor probably remembered, the former independence of the provinces, had, however, the sense to discover, in the memorials of their former greatness, “*des monumens fort utiles pour la conservation de mes droits, hauteurs, et domaines;*”** and she gave orders for the recovery and arrangement of all the public documents, under the care of the *président de la chambre des comptes*, at Brussels, and for the employment of two archivists for that purpose.

The taking of Brussels by the French, after the battle of Fontenoy, put a stop to this operation. Notwithstanding the terms of capitulation granted by Marshal Saxe, which stipulated for the preservation of the archives and library of her Imperial Majesty, they were plundered and thrown into disorder by the conquerors; the legitimate Louis acting precisely the part which has since been so bitterly execrated as exclusively revolutionary. Eight cases of this plunder were despatched to Lille, then become a French town. In the wars of Louis the Fourteenth, however, and on many other occasions, public documents to a much greater amount had fallen into the hands of the French; and it was not till the treaty of Versailles in 1769, that any attention was paid to the frequent reclamations of Austria on the subject. In consequence of this treaty, however,

* It was thus that the famous treaty of Marche-en-Famène, concluded between Don John of Austria and the States-General, in 1577, found its way into the possession of a Dutch family, who lately presented it to the King of the Pays-Bas: and thus, too, all the papers relative to the trial of the Counts d'Egmont and de Horne got into the libraries of private individuals. — See *Notice sur le Dépôt*, etc. etc.

** So expressed in her letter to her Governor-General *ad interim* of the Pays-Bas on the subject.

one hundred and twenty-six cases of papers were brought back from the dépôt in Lille alone.

During the long period which elapsed, until the year 1794, various efforts were made by patriotic individuals to draw the attention of the Austrian government to this subject; and various attempts were made, in the slow, unsatisfactory way peculiar to that government, to secure and arrange the public archives. But in the summer of 1794, a very large part of the collection was hastily packed up and transported to Holland, and subsequently to Vienna, in contemplation of the progressive successes of the republican armies. By the treaty of Campo Formio, it was agreed that the Belgian documents should be surrendered to the French, as the new masters of the country: a stipulation but imperfectly fulfilled. The more valuable portion of the documents remained behind at Vienna, till the taking of that city in 1809, when they, together with the archives of the whole German empire, were removed to Paris. After the treaty of Paris in 1814, the Belgic archives were again brought back; with the exception of about three hundred articles, reserved for the Austrian court;—by what right, it would be difficult to determine.

During the twenty years of French occupation, little or nothing was done for the preservation of such public documents as had been left untouched on the destruction of the Austrian power; but upon the erection of the new kingdom of the Pays-Bas, the *dépôt général*, which had gradually been formed at Brussels, was greatly enriched, as well by the restitutions already mentioned, as by the acquisition of the archives of Brabant, Namur, etc. etc.

Notwithstanding these frequent revolutions, and others of less extent, the collection as it now stands is one of the most extensive, and at the same time the most interesting, in Europe. The stirring and important events which have passed in the Low Countries, the valuable nature of their institutions, and the influence these have exercised on other states, give a value quite peculiar to this national collection: for if any new lights are to be obtained concerning the middle ages, and the times which immediately followed them, it is probably in these archives that they are concealed.

As Sir Frederick Mottram passed through the long stone passages of the *Dépôt des Archives*, ascended its narrow stairs, and entered the first of the series of apartments walled with the documents of

eight centuries, he fancied the very atmosphere impregnated with the dust of antiquity. He was received in the antiquarian study of Monsieur Gachard by its learned occupant, with all the elaborate forms of Brabançon courtesy, which contrasted with the easy, cold address, and simple ceremonial of the English gentleman, who never bends his head beyond the confines of his stock.

The functionary of the most liberal government in Europe received the ex-Tory minister with no other impression on his mind, but that of the pleasure arising from doing the honours of past times to one whose visit was deemed a national compliment, rarely paid by the travelling English of any party, who usually consider Brussels only as the great coffee-house of Europe.

After a short conversation concerning the origin and history of the establishment, of which the preceding paragraphs contain a short summary, Sir Frederick followed the learned archivist through a labyrinth of chambers, with increasing interest.

“ This,” said Monsieur Gachard, “ is the dépôt of the archives of the *chambre des comptes de Flandre*, an institution founded by Philip the Bold in 1383; and here, we approach the frontiers of modern diplomacy, the archives of the *conseil d'état*, dating from the reign of Charles the Fifth. 'Tis from this collection that the Austrian government carried off the correspondence of that emperor with the Duchess Marguerite his aunt, and with Mary his sister, who governed the Low Countries from 1522 to 1555; and the correspondence of Marguerite with Ferdinand King of the Romans. It is from this dépôt, too, that we have supplied the correspondence of Marguerite of Parma with Gérard de Groisbeck, to the pages of the *Analectes Belghiques*. But, precious above all its treasures, it contains the materials for the history of that *Marguerite des Marguerites*, the Duchess Marguerite of Austria, the aunt, guardian, and governess of Charles the Fifth,—the most able and brilliant of our female sovereigns. Another clever Marguerite has been working here this morning, with a view to the illustration of the lives of the able stateswomen to whom Belgium is so deeply indebted.”

“ An author, or an artist?” asked Sir Frederick, with affected indifference.

“ An artist,” replied his informant. “ She is employed, I be-

lieve, by the Princess of Schaffenhauseu to make researches for subjects to be illustrated by her able pencil."

"The Princess of Schaffenhauseu," Sir Frederick remarked, "is a great aristocrat, a disciple of the school of absolutism, and full of all sorts of German prejudices."

"The very reason why she should search here, where the origins of so many European titles and dignities may be found. The Schaffenhauseus boast of a descent from the Frankish Emperors of the West."

"Does madame Marguerite return here to-day? I should like to see some of her illustrations," said Sir Frederick, carelessly.

"She is at this moment somewhere in this world of papers. I left her carrying a huge portfolio of letters, in one of these chambers, when I was called away to have the honour of receiving you. It is curious to see so pretty a woman so deeply interested in antiquarian pursuits, and so frequently eliciting from her dry researches some new and brilliant inference. Not that she is learned in these matters; but she sees everything through her imagination, which brightens the gloom of antiquarian lore itself."

"It is thus women should always see!" said Sir Frederick, warmly. "It makes all the difference between poetry and pedantry; the ideality of female genius, and the dull dogged industry of female pretension; between *la femme fantastique*, and *la femme savante*; a Madame Marguerite and a Madame Dacier."

"Precisely so," said the Archivist, endeavouring to keep pace with the now rapid strides of his English visitor; who, with his glass to his eye, as if in search of some object not yet found, was hurrying on from chamber to chamber, regardless of the curious labels which marked their ponderous contents—'*Archives de la jointe des terres contestées*,' '*Archives du comité pour les affaires jésuitiques*,' '*des Ducs de Brabant*,' '*des Comtes de Namur*,' '*des corps de métiers*,' '*des corporations religieuses supprimées*;'—each the text for a volume of reflections, the finger-post alike for philosophy and for romance. They soon, therefore, again reached the chamber of the Archivist, the 'tribune of the gallery,' containing whatever was most precious in the collection.

This room, which they had left empty, was now occupied by a

female student, intently poring over a portfolio of musty papers, whose smell of time was dispersed by a bunch of orange flowers, placed beside her.

“It is Madame Marguerite,” whispered the Archivist, as they approached the fair student. “Well, Madam, you have found, I hope, what you were looking for?”

“Yes, and more too,” she said, directing her eyes to Sir Frederick. “Good morning, Monsieur Mottram; I am glad you have been tempted to visit this interesting place: I was sure it would amuse you.”

“Amuse me!” said Sir Frederick, with a smile that was almost a sneer. “You think that, like other great children escaped from the English go-cart, I only come forth from my nursery of prejudices to be amused!”

“I don’t say that,” said Madame Marguerite, resuming her work, as if she had no time for mere discourse; “but since you belong to the class of spoiled children (spoiled alike by nature, fortune, and circumstances), the cup of Truth, presented to you by some officious hand, should perhaps have its cold but golden brim just touched with honey.”

“It is the syren’s hackneyed mode of delusion,” said Sir Frederick, with marked emphasis; “but I knew not that the dignity of Truth stooped to such arts.”

“Oh! yes, Truth is — common sense; and common sense treats children as she finds them, whether they fall in her way fresh from the hands of nature, or moulded by those of society: she consults their force or their infirmities, and with reference to either, she will restrain by a rope, or lead by a wreath; and use hemp or roses, as the object of her solicitude may best require.”

“Of whose solicitude?” interrupted Sir Frederick, fixing her bright eyes, now raised, on his.

“Of — of — of whom were we talking?” asked Madame Marguerite, with the colour rushing over her face.

“Of common sense,” said the Archivist, the only one of the party whose thoughts had not diverged from the starting-post.

“Common sense,” said Sir Frederick, “is a common-place term, serving all sorts of purposes. It is sometimes applied to stupid discretion, that risks nothing and gains nothing; and sometimes it is

taken as a *nom de guerre* by genius, to conceal its own intensity of meaning from the apprehensive feebleness of its distrustful auditory. ”

“ Yes, it is impossible to appreciate terms, without some measure of the mind of the speaker, ” said Madame Marguerite. “ Give society a word, and it will be adopted without inquiry, employed without applicability, and flung away without thought, whenever fashion substitutes a newer phrase :—to give language a meaning, it must pass through a mind that has something to reflect. By the bye, Monsieur Gachard, your historians and antiquarians have treated words rather carelessly (at least names, epithets) when you suffered the charming Marguerite, ‘ *la gente Demoiselle*, ’ to retain the very false appellation of Marguerite of Austria ; for she is as much Marguerite of Belgium, as I am myself. ”

“ Yes, ” said Monsieur Gachard ; “ our great names, with our rich territories, have been too frequently made the plunder of strangers. It is thus that Monsieur Chateaubriand has taken from us our Godfrey of Bouillon. ”

“ Oh ! that is only one theft among many, ” continued Madame Marguerite. “ Few are aware how often, and how ably, the great movements of European society have been advanced by the nerve and sinews of Belgian leaders. The Pharamonds, the Clovises, the Pepins, for instance : one Flemish adventurer founded a kingdom on the ruins of that of Solomon, and another re-established the Latin empire in the East, in the thirteenth century. ”

“ Yes, said Sir Frederick, “ your *Bras-de-Fer* and *Têtes-de-Fer* were fine fellows ; but such prowess as theirs is no longer to be met with. ”

“ If such qualities were still available, they would be still forthcoming, ” she replied, tying up her papers : “ every age works with its own materials, and produces what it wants. This is the age of great events, and not of great men. There is no master-mind seen in Europe now—because there is no scope for its activity. The people have displaced individuals ; and Napoleon would have fallen, without the snows of Russia. You English conservatives overlook this. You think and act as if the same engines, and the same methods, which belonged to the most ignorant of ages, were applicable to the most enlightened. Look around you ! It is in such mouldering

masses as this, that you seek for precedents, as ill adapted to the contingencies of the day, as the Godfreys and the Baldwins would be to figure in your congresses of Vienna and Laybach. ”

“ You non-conservatives, however,” replied Sir Frederick, “ are too absolute, too abstract in your conclusions. In theory, we are not, perhaps, so very far apart as you imagine : it is on the question of practicability that we most widely differ. Our views of human nature ”

“ Are formed upon the narrow experience of your exclusive circles,” she interrupted, “ and they are for ever misleading you. But this is a great confession from you. ”

“ And a proof that you think the honey on the brim of the cup of truth has induced me to swallow the draught, *sans m'en douter*. ”

“ To sip, not to swallow,” she replied, laughing : “ but the honest are open to conviction when the faction ‘ that doth hedge in ’ a minister, or leader of a party, can be broken through ; the great difficulty is to get at them. Few dare to step forward to lead the forlorn hope, and to risk life and peace in storming the outworks without the possibility of arriving at the citadel of the deeply-trenched prejudice. ”

“ The hope, which is led by such eyes as now direct the charge, can never be forlorn,” said Sir Frederick, in a low voice, and in English.

“ Monsieur Gachard ! ” she called out, rising, and taking her papers. Monsieur Gachard was at that moment engaged with a gentleman who had just entered the apartment ; but he hurried back to Madame Marguerite, who whispered some request, to which he replied with a bow, “ I shall have the honour. ” Madame Marguerite was now at the door ; and, turning round, she said, “ *Monsieur le Ministre*, I count on you for to-morrow evening. It is my *soirée d'adieu* to my Brussels friends and brother artists. You must, for a few hours, give up to a party what is meant for mankind. ” And she quoted the line in English, to one to whom the literature of England was familiar.

“ I shall not fail,” he replied, offering his arm to the artist.

“ No,” she said, drawing back, and laughing ; “ I have gone through life without an arm to lean on ; and I will not now risk my independence, by taking the arm of a minister of state, even though

he be *le plus aimable de tous les ministres possibles*." She bowed and retired.

"Who was that very intellectual-looking person, to whom you addressed the title of *Monsieur le Ministre*," said Sir Frederick, as he followed Madame Marguerite down stairs.

"The Minister of the Interior, Monsieur Rogier. You are surprised at a poor artist inviting a minister to her tea-party, but such is the state of things at Brussels. Besides that the arts and literature are under the special protection of his department, he has all those sympathies for talent which belong to a man whose own personal qualifications have placed him in his present eminent situation."

They were now at the entrance of the Dépôt, and Madame Marguerite had sprung into the carriage that was waiting for her, when Sir Frederick put his foot upon the step, as if to detain her, and prevented the servant from closing the door; "You spoke," he said, "to that gentleman of a *soirée d'adieu*. Do you, then, positively leave Brussels the day after to-morrow?"

"It is the Princess's present intention; but, certainly, to-morrow evening will be the last appearance of Madame Marguerite on the stage of Belgium in the character of a professional artist."

Sir Frederick looked amazed.

"And if," she continued, "you have a mind to witness the exhibition, I shall be happy to see you at it. But I keep Belgian hours—*point de réveillon*."

"You may count upon me, though the arts are not under my protection. But where are you going now?"

"To the *Bibliothèque des Ducs de Bourgogne*," she said, "to finish some illuminations which I have been copying for the Princess."

"I am going there too; perhaps you would set me down."

"With pleasure. But I have a visit to pay on the road; not altogether unconnected with the arts, however. Will you trust yourself with me for the morning?"

"For life!" he replied eagerly, and he sprang into the carriage; when, perceiving the front seat occupied, he paused, under the supposition that it was the Princess of Schaffhausen; for it was her carriage and liveries. Finding, however, that the stranger was only a humble sister of the *Béguinage*, he took his place, mortified

to be thus for ever disappointed in the hope of finding the piquante and original artist alone. He believed he had so much to say, so much to inquire, so much to discuss, so much to reproach; and with a marked sharpness of expression, he said in English, as the carriage rolled on, "You remind me, Madame Marguerite, of those religious orders, whose members are never permitted to go alone."

"It is a wise precaution," she answered evasively, and in the same language, "founded on a knowledge of the uneradicable folly of humanity, when left to itself. Solitude, enforced, is madness; and, when freely chosen, it indicates natural defect or a diseased mind: no one, well organized, will love or seek it. No one is the better for wandering alone through life; and, trust me, no one is the happier. The wretched are often left alone, the fortunate never." She sighed deeply; and then, after a short pause, added, "You never could have known, Sir Frederick, what it was to be left utterly to your own resources, abandoned, deserted, your very existence unguessed at, uncared for; for you have always had something to give! — the Gordian knot of society."

"A severe summary of its nature and motives. But I have often wished to be all you mention; I have often, like Madame de Sévigné, been hungry for silence and solitude."

"And, like her, you would have broken through both to seek and to gossip with your gardener, rather than endure them for a week. No, no, it is not good to be alone! Omniscience admitted the fact at the creation, and declared co-operation the fundamental law in His great scheme of moral government."

"No human being can more thoroughly feel the wisdom of the doctrine than myself," said Sir Frederick, with earnestness. "I hold a communication with something that suits us, to be the sum of human bliss."

"And were there none among your late colleagues who answered to this description?" asked Madame Marguerite, with a tone of perfect simplicity.

"My late colleagues!" he repeated in a bitter tone, as he threw himself back in the carriage, with the feeling of one who was startled from a delicious reverie by a dash of cold water thrown over his heated brow.

“ Lord Eldon, for instance,” she continued coolly; “ or Sare Wetherell, or——”

“ Madame Marguerite,” he interrupted with vehemence, “ I have more than once observed, that you have the art of making yourself disagreeable beyond any person I ever met with. You have a power, all your own, of stilling the pulse you have raised; of freezing the most genial flow of happy sensations, and of throwing the wretch, who would escape the purgatory into which destiny has hurled him, back to its deepest holds.”

“ *Pour trancher le mot,*” she said in French, “ *je suis ce qu’on appelle une fâcheuse,—en Anglais, a bore.*”

“ It would be very difficult to say what you are,” he replied, with an irrepressible smile, at variance with his closely-knitted brow; “ but it is possible to conceive what you might be, with a little restraint on your froward humour, a little warmth in your icy heart, and some of the ardour of your bright imagination thrown over your composed, regulated, and prudent feelings.”

“ *Ciel, que de vertus vous me faites haïr !*” she exclaimed, laughing; “ but you must take me as I am.”

“ *Take* you indeed!” he muttered; “ you——”

“ Use me as you find me, and fling me off, when the arrival of your English set throws a ridicule on your acquaintance with one without a single artificial distinction to recommend her to your notice, and who above all wants that stamp of fashion, without which no merit is current in your London !”

“ And you really think me capable of that ?”

“ Think you !” she said, emphatically, and with deep emotion: “ know you. Time may subdue, but cannot change. Habits of mind, like those of physical life, grow unconquerable by indulgence. Remember the death-bed in the parish workhouse !”

“ Ha !” he exclaimed, with the suspiration of one suddenly struck with a knife; the blood rushed from his face, and then returned with increased glow and impetuosity. “ Then you *were* the person, as I have long suspected, who brought me to that sad scene. But when you know all,—the motives, the circumstances——”

“ I do know all. But it is altogether a painful remembrance; and it is my creed not to encounter a pain, when no good is to result from the sacrifice. That scene, and all connected with it, is now

over, and for ever ! *autant en emporte le vent* ;” and she kissed the tips of her beautiful fingers, as she spoke, and blew over them, with an air of infantine grace and *naïveté*.

“ And now for the world of arts, the divine, fresh, and ever-inspiring arts. I am going to present you to the conservator of one of their most delightful temples. Trust me, my dear Sir Frederick,” she added, in a tone which gave a touch of cordial and kindly humanity to the expression, “ the arts are fine things to cling to ; they are true friends, and, like true friends, they remain with us to the last. Music !—painting !—they are the language of Nature herself ; they are worth a world of sickly sentiment, and far beyond that *girouette* and pretending thing called Reason !”

“ You are in the right,” he said, earnestly, “ to cry down reason ; for none, I believe, like you, have so completely the power of deranging it. But pray forgive an earnestness, a more than curiosity in all that concerns you. You express your love of the arts ; and yet you are relinquishing them, professionally.”

“ Yes, in Belgium.”

“ You are right. There is no scope here for genius like yours. A country, whose resources are so disproportionate to its wants, cannot recompense those talents which, though they contribute to the charm of life, must give place to the more pressing necessities of a young state just rising out of revolution.”

“ To what country, then, would you advise me to direct my steps ?”

“ To England, where everything finds its market ; a country where genius never works in vain, or, at least, never unrecompensed.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed Madame Marguerite, as the carriage stopped at the door of a small house, in a remote and melancholy suburb : “ here dwells one who tells a very different story.”

They alighted, and Madame Marguerite led the way up a narrow staircase, and was followed by Sir Frederick Mottram to a small landing-place on the second story. She put up her finger, in token of silence, and then opened the door of a back room, unheard by its sole occupant. A female in black habiliments was seated near the only casement, which commanded no gayer view than the red-tiled roofs of Brussels. She was deeply occupied in reading from

a folio bible, which rested on her knees. A large coffin, covered with hieroglyphics, stood open and upright before her : it contained the most perfect mummy, perhaps, in existence. The walls and floor of the little room were covered with fragments, drawings, and objects of Egyptian antiquity : on the table were several relics, deemed holy, in holy land, which once would have been purchased by the diadem of royal saints and imperial pilgrims, but which now derived their chief value in the eyes of their *triste* possessor, as memorials of that all-enterprising mind, whose researches extended into the abyss of time, and rescued from oblivion evidences of many of the great and successive events which marked its passage to eternity.

The female was Mrs. Belzoni : she received the visitors with the grace which always goes with strong feeling, but was evidently both affected and surprised by the visit.

“ Madame Belzoni,” said Madame Marguerite, “ I have taken the liberty of bringing a countryman of yours, to do honour to the memory of your husband in your person : he is a lover of the arts, an antiquarian, and one of that large class of English virtuosi, to whom foreign talents stand so greatly indebted for liberal encouragement.”

Sir Frederick coloured deeply, and stuttered an awkward compliment to the genius of Belzoni, and a hope of being useful to his widow on his return to England.

Madame Belzoni, in reply, observed, “ that she wanted nothing but the means of leaving Europe, and laying herself down in the tomb ‘ under the shade of *the avasma*’ at Gato.”* She wept passionately, and, instead of expatiating on her own distresses, talked only of Belzoni’s virtues, his services, and sacrifices. She did not utter one word against that administration which so largely benefited by the glory of his researches, without advancing one guinea in aid of his splendid, his stupendous exertions.

The books, drawings, and objects of Egyptian *virtù* occupied the attention of the visitors, till the tolling of a bell reminded Madame

* Belzoni died at Gato, in the kingdom of Benin, on his route to Houssa and Timbuctoo, 1825 ; he is buried under a tree, with a few palisades round his unhonoured tomb.

Marguerite how little time was left for the visit to the library of the Dukes of Burgundy.

Sir Frederick and Madame Marguerite were again seated in the carriage, and nearly half-way to the object of their drive, before a silence, mutually maintained, was broken.

“Madame Marguerite,” at length Sir Frederick said, with some bitterness, “you have a mode of acting epigrams, as other people dramatize charades.”

“There is nothing like these *tableaux vivans*,” she replied, “for bringing home conviction. You Tories are fond of boasting of the great discoveries which illustrated your long reign; yet Belzoni died of a broken heart, and his widow languishes in poverty in a foreign country.”

“This, it is to be hoped, is a rare exception to our general conduct towards those who have served us: we shall see what the Whigs will do for genius, now that they hold the public purse.”

The carriage now passed into the fine old monumental court of the *Palais de l'ancienne Cour*, and drew up before a narrow arched gate. Sir Frederick and Madame Marguerite descended, and left the good little *Sœur Béguine* to pore over the life of St. Gudule, written in good old Flemish. Sir Frederick offered his arm.

“Not so fast,” said Madame Marguerite, drawing him away to another part of the court. “You see, there, one of the royal carriages. It is the young Queen, who frequently comes here. Besides, look about you. There is not a site in Europe more illustrated by historical events than this court and palace. Oh! the scenes that have passed, the persons who have trod, the hearts that have throbbed here! The Hornes, the D'Egmonts, the gallant William of Nassau, the splendid *Gueux des Bois*, with their devotedness to national independence, ‘*jusqu'à la besace*;' and then that great melodramatic event performed here, the abdication of Charles the Fifth! There is no history so replete with dramatic incidents as that of the Low Countries. The habitual struggles of the people for an independence, so opposed by the circumstances of their position, has rendered it a stirring romance. This ancient palace will supply you with a whole day's amusement in itself. You must come with your Belgian Plutarch, or some other short cut to history, such as suits Englishmen of fashion and classical scholars.”

“Your arrow falls pointless,” said Sir Frederick, dryly. “I have been dipping into Flemish chronicles, in good old French, ever since I landed at Ostend.”

At that moment the royal carriages drew up. A fair young person, accompanied by two other ladies, entered the first. It was the Queen, attended by Mesdames de Stassart and de Merode. Monsieur Marchal, the conservator of the library, was still bowing off the royal visitor, when, perceiving Madame Marguerite, he came forward, with equal courtesy, though with less formality, to receive her. After she had presented Sir Frederick Mottram, and as they ascended the narrow stone stairs together, she said,

“You have a visit from a descendant of the Dukes of Burgundy; an interesting incident! Republicanism itself cannot resist the charm of such an association, connected as it is with all that is imaginative in history.”

“The Queen,” said Monsieur Marchal, “has been here the greater part of the morning. This is her Majesty’s fourth visit. The knowledge she has acquired, and the pleasure she takes, in studies so rarely pursued by the young and gay of her sex, are happy presages.”

“It would never do,” said Madame Marguerite, “to have the Queen of the Belgians like some of the queens distributed over the old courts of Europe; who, with their narrow acquirements of tent-stitch and twaddle, expect the world is to go on, as in the good old times, when cabinets were agitated by the minuet de Lorraine, and *l’affaire des parasols fut une affaire d’état*.”

“I’d as soon they meddled with tent-stitch as politics,” said Sir Frederick.

“Suppose they should happen to do both,” she replied, “and, like Madame de Maintenon, bring their work-bags to the privy council; and direct the affairs of Europe, while they trace patterns for foot-stools! The influence of woman was, is, and ever will be exercised, directly or indirectly, in good or in evil! It is a part of the scheme of nature. Give her then the lights she is capable of receiving; educate her (whatever her station) for taking her part in society. Her ignorance has often made her interference fatal: her knowledge, never.”

“The result, at least, can never be the same,” said Monsieur Marchal. “We owe the principal treasures of this library to a woman.

Marguerite of Burgundy, or of Belgium, (vulgarly called of Austria,) was to the Low Countries, what Francis the First was to France."

"And a little more," said Madame Marguerite; "for the policy of her government was as wise, as her protection of letters was humanizing, and that is more than can be said of the '*fors l'honneur*' king."

They now stood in the centre of one of the most curious, as well as ancient, libraries in Europe. Its air of antiquity, the gemmed lights of its stained windows, the portraits of the Dukes of Burgundy encased in its dark walls, the magnificent and antique binding of its precious volumes, render it as picturesque to behold as curious to examine.

"Shake the dust of the age you live in from your feet," said Madame Marguerite, addressing Sir Frederick; "'be innocent of the future,' and resign yourself wholly to the past. I give you up to Monsieur Marchal, from whom old Time has no secrets, and whose *tête encyclopédique* may be consulted with confidence upon all subjects connected with the progress of mind through the dimness of past ages."

She sat herself down before an illuminated volume, and continued to work at a copy which she had already begun; while the gentlemen took down volumes and looked through manuscripts.

"How far back does your library date?" asked Sir Frederick, astonished at the antiquity of an illuminated missal he was looking through.

"It is the sister of the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, at Paris," replied the Conservator, "of which Charles-le-Sage may be considered as almost the founder. At that epoch, arts and literature flourished in Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, and, above all, at Bruges, where the finest parchment was manufactured. But the immediate founder of this collection was the Duc de Bourgogne, Philip the Good; who, on succeeding to the duchy of Brabant, formed in Brussels an establishment for copying manuscripts, which he placed under the direction of David Aubert; a man of great merit, who surrounded himself with a train of historians, romancers, translators, designers, and calligraphers; and caused more than three hundred volumes of the greatest value to be completed, for the instruction and amusement of his patrons. But, perhaps, you will be more amused

with seeing the results, than with hearing the history ? ”

“No, no,” interrupted Sir Frederick ; “ pray go on. If you knew my passion for these subjects, and my ignorance on the present occasion, you would not hesitate. ”

“ Charles le Téméraire,” said Monsieur Marchal, “ on succeeding to his father, continued to encourage the learned. The translation of the Cyropædia, lately given to this library by the Queen of the Belgians, was transcribed for his use. It had been taken in the battle of Nancy, in 1477, in which the Duke himself was killed. Mary, his daughter, married Maximilian of Austria. A prince so miserable, ignorant, and wasteful, was ill adapted for maintaining the splendour of his predecessors ; he abandoned the volumes collected by them to the money-lenders ; and many of the most valuable works in this library thus found their way into the other European collections.”

“ That was a worthy child of the house of Hapsburg, that Maximilian,” burst forth Madame Marguerite ; “ inimical to letters in all aspects.”

“ Philip-le-Beau, his son,” continued Monsieur Marchal, “ by Mary of Burgundy, had all the good qualities of the Burgundian princes, without their faults. His reign was a golden age ; and his sister, *our* Marguerite (called) ‘ of Austria,’ was celebrated for her literary labours, of which some volumes are still preserved in this collection. History places her among the most illustrious princes and able diplomatists of the sixteenth century. She it was that educated Charles the Fifth. ”

“ Yes,” said Madame Marguerite ; “ but his mother, Jeanne la Folle, was before her.”

“ Maria, Queen of Hungary, sister of Charles the Fifth, born, like him, at Ghent, had all the great qualities of a perfect stateswoman. She brought from Hungary the missal of Matthias Corvinus, translated and illuminated in Italy, and finished in the Low Countries ; which is by far the finest manuscript now existing in Europe. Here it is. The Dukes of Brabant swore upon it to observe the *Joyeuse Entrée*, the old political constitution of the province. See how this illumination has suffered from the process.” *

* There is one picture, on which this process has been so often performed,

“How proud you Belgians ought to be of your women of the olden times,” said Madame Marguerite, still occupied with her drawing.

“And I have no doubt we shall have reason to be so of some of the women of the present,” said Monsieur Marchal, bowing and continuing. “In the turbulent reign of Philip the Second, the President Viglius assembled the volumes of this library in the palace of the sovereign, to protect them from outrage and spoliation; since which time, till the reign of Maria Theresa, its condition continued stationary. Marshal Saxe carried off some of its best contents to Paris; but they were restored on the marriage of Marie-Antoinette. In Ninety-four, everything precious was again transported to the French capital, and Napoleon caused a vast number of the volumes to be bound in red morocco and marked with the imperial cipher. In 1815 they were once more restored to this palace, though it is thought that William had some idea of depositing them at the Hague. Since the revolution, the collection has again been thrown open to the public.” *

that it is nearly obliterated: — a fit emblem of the fate of such promissory oaths.

* This short account of a collection so eminently curious, was taken down from the words of the learned and courteous librarian himself, to whom the Author takes this opportunity of acknowledging the many obligations conferred by his kindness and attention. The story is shortly but clearly told in an inscription which he has set up in the library, and which runs as follows:

“ Cette ancienne bibliothèque royale,
formée des librairies que les Ducs de Bourgogne avaient créées
pour le délassement et l’instruction des princes de leur sang,
Augmentée par les Souverains Autrichiens,
Renfermant des Manuscrits précieux de douze siècles,
Transportée en partie à Paris 1726, restituée en 1770,
Fut ouverte au public en 1772 par Marie Thérèse
et le Prince Charles,
De nouveau enlevée en 1794—rendue en 1815,
Elle est destinée par un arrêté du 24 Avril 1831,
à devenir la base d’un Musée historique.”

“ Well,” said Sir Frederick, in acknowledging the courtesy which had inspired this detail, “ you see that these princes, whom your revolutionary doctrines decry, are, after all, the best patrons and encouragers of learning.”

“ When mind, like power, was confined to the few,” said Madame Marguerite, “ the few were its natural protectors.”

“ With all due gratitude to the Dukes of Burgundy,” said the Conservator, “ we stand also indebted to the present constitutional government. Notwithstanding the large demands which are made on the public purse by the unsettled state of our foreign relations, the Minister of the Interior has authorized me to continue the sumptuous bindings commenced by Napoleon, to replace the portraits of all our sovereigns since the commencement of the Burgundian dynasty, and to ornament the windows with stained glass in imitation of the old art; and, every day, I receive permission to purchase fresh manuscripts : so that the sixteen thousand volumes of which the present collection consists, will be rapidly increased in every department of human knowledge.”

“ Here is a book and a binding,” said Madame Marguerite, “ beyond all price in the estimation of such antiquarians as Sir Frederick and myself.”

She had taken up a very antique volume of manuscript, of an oblong form, bound in black damask.

“ It is the album or common-place book of one of our great stateswomen, the Duchess Marguerite,” said Monsieur Marchal : “ her government of the Low Countries, and her famous treaty of Cambray, in which she outwitted the wily cardinal d’Amboise, and a woman as astute, though not as enlightened as herself, entitle her to that epithet.” He added, as he presented the book, “ You see here her well-known and mystic device—‘ *Fortune, infortune, fortune.*’ ”

Sir Frederick started : the eyes of Madame Marguerite were fixed on him with a strange expression; but she resumed her drawing.

“ Here,” continued the Conservator, “ are her arms on the cover, and here is her autograph.”

“ *Balades!*” said Sir Frederick, reading the title, “ a strange work for a diplomatist!”

“ Oh, she was a true woman !” said Madame Marguerite — “ author, politician, sovereign, but *femme avant tout* ; as every word in this most charming volume shows. Here is a stanza *tracé d'inspiration*, in her own hand-writing, to prove it : it is in the old Flemish-French of her court, which has a charm for me beyond the *purism* of a French academician.

‘ Quelque soit, je vous oublieray ,
Pleust à Dieu que fût de ceste heure ,
Mais de tant plus , qu'à ce labeure ,
Tant plus en mémoire vous ay.’

Through the obscurity of this old French you see the idea of Moncrieff's delightful refrain,

‘ En songeant qu'il faut qu'on l'oublie ,
On s'en souvient.’ ”

“ What a charming line !” said Sir Frederick, devouring the manuscript. “ It appears through all these stanzas that the Princess Marguerite was unhappy.”

“ To be sure she was,” said Madame Marguerite. “ She had got the start of her age, a crime never forgiven. She had the heart of a woman, the mind of a man, and was tied down to the barbarous formalities of a court she despised. Here is the *résumé* of her life, called *Chanson faite par Madame* :

‘ C'est pour jamais que regret me demeure ,
Qui sans cesser , nuit et jour, à tout eue
Tant me tourmant que bien voudroie mourir.’ ”

“ *En attendant*, however,” said Monsieur Marchal ; “ she amused herself pretty gaily, as this old and very damaged volume proves. You see, it once had a splendid cover ; it was bound in crimson damask. The paper is black with golden letters, its title *Plusiers basse dance*. It was the quadrille book of the Court of Brussels in the fifteenth century, and belonged to our Duchess Marguerite herself. Here is an explanation of the dances *à la mode*, in seventeen pages that follow the music ; and here are the

names, ‘ *La Marguerite*,’ ‘ *L’espérance de Bourbon*,’ ‘ *M’amours*,’ ‘ *Ma mie*,’ ‘ *Va-t-en, mon amoureux désir*,’ ‘ *Filles à marier*,’ ‘ *La dance de Ravestain*,’ ‘ *La douce Amour*,’ and ‘ *Le joyeux de Bruxelles*,’ a name of true Belgian origin.”

“ Yes,” said Madame Marguerite ; “ it is remarkable that the Belgians, like the old Castilians, were a vivacious people, till the *espionnage* established in domestic life by the Spanish rule quenched their spirit in a cautious, if not gloomy reserve ; but they will soon recover under free institutions, and we shall have them dancing the *joyeux de Bruxelles*, as in the time of their own Madame Marguerite.”

“ No doubt,” said the Conservator ; “ and I am glad that you, Madame, are collecting materials for the life of that most accomplished Belgian lady.”

“ Oh ! only for its pictorial illustrations.”

“ Who, then, is to compose the text ?” asked Sir Frederick.

“ The Princess of Schaffenhause, ” replied Madame Marguerite.

“ Is she capable of that ? ” said Sir Frederick ; “ with her creed of absolutism, so different from your own, as to make your connexion a paradox. ”

“ We have a stronger tie than that of opinion. She wants me, I want her—*Je vous conviens, vous me convenez*. As for the work, she will bring to it all her *amour-propre* ; and that is a great inspiration. Her husband, by the Trazeymers, is descended from the Dukes of Burgundy ; I have just picked up ‘ *La véritable Histoire de Gilleon de Trazeymer*, ’ a very old work, with which she is delighted. ”

“ But here,” said Monsieur Marchal, returning from the other end of the library—“ here is the pearl of our collection ; as bearing upon a fashionable branch of modern literature. It is the joint production of two pretty women ; commenced in the sixteenth century by one, and finished by the other in the seventeenth—Marie de Behercke, and Wilhelma Del Vael. ”

“ The first *bas-bleus* on record, I suppose ? ” said Sir Frederick.

“ In what relation these two ladies stood to each other, or how the volume passed from one to the other, is unknown,” continued Madame Marguerite ; “ but a very pleasant hypothesis was raised the

other evening by Monsieur Campan,* that they were grandmother and grand-daughter ; and he speculated upon the ludicrous effect the love vows addressed to the elder lady must have had on the younger, who could only have known her as old, wrinkled, and venerable. ”

“ Yet, ” said Sir Frederick, “ the thought did not prevent her registering her own loves for the benefit of her grand-children. The *hommages*, I see, are in all languages, and would answer as well for the albums for 1855 as for 1624 (the date of some of its verses). Pray, what does this Flemish mean ?

‘ Naer lyden
Kompt verblyden. ’ ”

“ Why, that the author was as great a coxcomb as any other of the species, ” said Madame Marguerite : “ *verbatim*, it is, ‘ *after pain comes pleasure* ; ’ the reverse was more probably the truth, though that does not much matter now. ”

“ Here, ” said Monsieur Marchal, laying his hand on a pile of very old manuscripts, in coarse antiquated binding, “ here is another æra of mind, illustrated with the names and autographs of Erasmus, Heinsius, and Puteanus ; but *je vous ferai grâce des pédans en us*, one little anecdote excepted. Dorothee de Croy, Duchesse de Croy, sent these complimentary verses to Puteanus,

‘ Blâmera qui voudra le style de ta voix,
Et tes divins écrits d’où naissent l’ambrosie,
Elle n’a pas de goût pour l’ignare et l’envie :
Ains agace leurs dents et cause tant d’abois ;
Abais qui n’ont pouvoir que d’honorer ta fâme,
Et accroistre ton los en accroissant leur blâme.

‘ *A Bruxelles, 6^e Février 1614.* ’

“ And how do you think Puteanus replied ? ”

“ Like a pedant, of course, ” said Madame Marguerite.

* Monsieur Campan has since made this manuscript the subject of a pleasant article in *l’Artiste*, a Brussels periodical work of distinguished merit, to which some of the most eminent men are contributors.

“ Exactly ; by criticising the false concord in the second line , which he calls a ‘ *synthèse peu tolérable*. ’ ”

“ The learned men of that day, unlike those of the present times, ” said Sir Frederick, with a slight bow of the head, “ knew but little of the courtesies of life. ”

“ *A propos* to which, ” said Madame Marguerite, “ we must not intrude farther on the inexhaustible politeness of Monsieur Marchal : the hour for closing the Bibliothèque is come. ”

“ It is so natural, ” said Sir Frederick, “ to forget time, when searching into its records, under such auspices. ”

“ I am always too happy to do the honours by visitors of all nations ; but more particularly by such true lovers of antiquity and arts, as Monsieur, and Madame Marguerite. ”

“ It is a privilege, ” said Sir Frederick, as he conducted her to the carriage, “ to be presented by you. ”

“ Yes, here : but I could do nothing for you at Almack’s. ”

“ It is, perhaps, the only place where I should not require your protection. ”

“ *A l’Hôpital de la Vieillesse Malheureuse*, ” said Madame Marguerite to her servant. “ I will not ask you, Sir Frederick, to accompany me there. ”

“ If you did, I should accept the invitation, as I have done that for to-morrow evening, without calculating the consequences. But you have not given me the *itinéraire* of your Pavillon. ”

“ Here it is, ” she said, presenting him a card, “ and remember the hour. ”

“ You will find it more difficult, ” he replied, “ to teach me to forget, than to remember :

‘ En songeant qu’il faut qu’on l’oublie,
On s’en souvient. ’ ”

Madame Marguerite drove off for the hospital, and Sir Frederick to dress for a dinner at Monsieur Engler’s, preoccupied, amused, and—in love : golden circumstances in the life of the idle, the *ennuyé*, and the susceptible.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FÊTE IN THE FOREST.

No capital in Europe possesses more beautiful environs than that of Belgium. Deficient in every feature of sublimity, in all that strikes boldly on the mind, and awes the imagination; with no Alps that rise, no sea that rolls, no volcanic elements to threaten or destroy, there is everywhere much to cheer the spirit of man, and nothing to make him feel how light, in the great scheme of creation, are his individual interests and existence.

That hardy and strenuous enterprise, which found the Low Countries the region of the crane and the stork, the refuge of the wolf and the boar, has left it the land where man may best feel himself the lord of the ascendant. Rich in a soil that teems with luxurious abundance, with forests that shade and temper the influence of the elements, the provinces of Belgium unite in their scenery the highest features of moral and picturesque beauty. Its feudal castles, and holds of force and violence, serve now but as features for the painter, to tip a crag, or to frown over a glen. Its magnificent abbeys and lonely monasteries, once the causes of popular prostration, are now subsidiary to the wants of man, the receptacles and the shelter of his industry: and everywhere the bell-capped mansion and comfortable cottage give token of a pervading equality, and fill up the fearful vacuum which in other less blessed regions separates the castle and the hut. Even the faubourgs and suburban dependencies of Brussels are scenes to paint, as well as to enjoy. The valley and village of Etterbeek, its gardens, and ponds, and rustic *guinguettes*; the hamlet of Ixelles, with its splendid prospects; the superb park of La Cambre; Boisfort, which rivals in beauty the villages of Switzerland, with the deep and dark line of the Forest of Soignes, are subjects of the

highest inspiration to pictorial genius—of the profoundest reflection to the moral philosopher.

Amidst these various sites, replete with picturesque beauty, there is one of pre-eminent loveliness, where the eloquent silence of Nature in her grand repose is interrupted by the evening song of myriads of nightingales. It is called the 'Groenendael,' or green valley. There still moulder the ruined cloisters of the once stupendous monastery, to which the Infanta Isabel, one of the ablest and most powerful sovereigns of the Low Countries, retreated from the cares of state and the tedium of a court. There, too, the Emperor Charles the Fifth bade his last farewell to greatness; and, surrounded by Philip the second; Eleanor, the wife of Francis the First; Marie, Queen of Hungary; Maximilian of Austria and his wife, and Mulez Hassan, a King of Numidia, took an early repast, previous to resigning the imperial crown for the cowl of a monk.

In a site so favoured by nature, so consecrated by time, so tinged with ideality, and yet so within the lines of civilization, the late Prince of Schaffenhauseu possessed an ancient hunting-tower. This descendant of one of the great feudal families of Europe, the Belgian Prince, the Spanish Grandee, the Count of the Empire, had all the faults, prejudices, and tendencies incidental to his caste. Selfish, haughty, despotic, sensual, he was witty and tasteful: a voluptuary in the capitals of Europe, passionate for the arts, and liberal in their encouragement; in his castle on the Rhine he would gladly have been a petty *suzerain*, as his father was before him, whose uncontrolled power had actually permitted him to pronounce sentence of death on one of his serfs, and to execute it in the court of his castle. The once astute statesman, the disciple of absolutism, was utterly disappointed and disgusted with the arrangements which had followed the battle of Waterloo. His hope for Belgium had centred in the restoration of the Austrian power; and he was wont to say that he did not choose to be elbowed by the petty Princes of Nassau, who had no political existence when his own family were sovereign powers.

He was one of the many grand seigneurs of Brussels who left it for Vienna, in the same disgust against the government of King William, as those of his class and temper have lately exhibited against King Leopold. In disposing, therefore, of his splendid hotel in the

old Spanish quarters of Brussels, (the neighbourhood of the Alvas and the Furstembergs,) he had sent his precious pictures, and other objects of art, to his ancient *campagne* belonging to his family in the Groenendael, until he could make up his mind in which of his many mansions he should deposit them.

Chance, and a pursuit of the arts, had brought to visit this remote gallery in the forest the person whom he had afterwards made his wife ; and it was at her suggestion that he had been induced to re-edify and enlarge the building; but the outbreak of the Belgian revolution drove him again from his temporary residence in its neighbourhood, and interrupted the progress of his improvement and his plans.

Shortly afterwards he married,—partly from passion, and partly in the hope of disinheriting his next heir. His death, however, occurred almost immediately after his marriage ; and his liberal bequests to his widow left the successor to his title nothing beyond that the law awarded him. Over his German property he had no power, save the splendid ruins of a castle on the Rhine ; but his Belgian estate, in the neighbourhood of the Forest of Soignes, he had left to the now celebrated Princess of Schaffenhhausen.

His widowed Princess had probably shared the prejudices of her aristocratic husband, as she had not visited Brussels since her marriage. It was only within the last few months, that orders had arrived from England to her agent, to continue the edifice in the Forest of Soignes, and to double the number of workmen employed on it.

Since the Princess's arrival in Belgium, she had made the Pavilion of the Groenendael her head-quarters ; declining all visits, and busied in superintending her buildings, and inquiring into the state of her affairs. The caprice of ennui (that malady of the fortunate, that penalty of the rich) might have probably determined her to seek amusement in this expensive toy ; thus adding one more superfluous residence to those she already possessed without occupying : but it was generally supposed that the influence which Madame Marguerite had obtained over her, had been the more immediate cause of recommencing the fairy palace, in which possibly the whimsical Armida would never eventually dwell.

It was in this pavilion that the retiring artist had obtained permis-

sion to make her adieus to her brethren, on quitting professional life under the liberal protection of her sumptuous patroness.

The sun had nearly set, and the tops of the trees of La Cambre, and the pinnacles of the abbey, were alone brightened by its declining rays, as Sir Frederick stopped his carriage at that beautiful and elevated point of view called *l'Arbre vert*. He had done so at the advice of his courier, to look down on the rich and magnificent scene that spread beneath; and then proceeded by Boisfort, through the Forest of Soignes, to an opening among the trees, which led by a foot-path to the pavilion of the Groenendael. Having left his carriage at a *guinguette*, (where a vine-covered porch displayed a living group, such as, in the language of art, would be described as a happy accident,) he set out on foot with his guide, by a tangled brake diverging into many 'an alley green,' till the deep, dark defiles of interlacing trees scarcely left more than a straggling ray of light to point the way. A gurgling stream roamed amidst the high rank herbage, nourished by one of those springs which so frequently gush up amidst forest-scenery like magical creations. Sir Frederick, as he forced his way along the tangled and briary path, soon withdrew his attention from the natural beauties of the scene; and in some impatience he asked his courier, "Is there no carriage-road to the pavilion?"

"There is a road now clearing, Monsieur le Chevalier," replied the courier, "a mile below the village of Boisfort; and another old and rutted road leads from the hamlet of Groenendael to La Hulpe: but this is the shortest and the most beautiful; and it opens at once on the *rendez-vous de chasse*, where Monseigneur le Prince began his *maison de plaisance*. Excepting the pavilion at Tervueren, there will be nothing comparable to it, if Madame la Princesse ever completes it: but, *hundert tausend sacrament!* 'who will answer for a great lady!' It was Madame Marguerite's postilion who desired me to bring *votre seigneurie* by this track: I hope I haven't lost my way."

"I hope so, too, with all my soul!" said Sir Frederick.

The next moment the hope was realized, by the appearance of twinkling lights, which sparkled like fire-flies through the branches of the trees, and by the faint sounds of music. Farther on, a dark arcade, cleared under the entwined branches of a mass of elms,

opened at once upon the pavilion, which stood in the midst of one of those cleared spaces that, in forest-scenery, are designated as a *rendez-vous de chasse*. Its gothic porch was of pure white stone, and presented a perfect specimen of the most ornamented and elaborate style of that picturesque order. Its long, narrow, and elegant casements, filled with painted glass, threw their many-coloured tints on the green sward without; and three pointed arches, opening to the free air, gave a perfect view of the interior of an illuminated gallery behind. The light shafts and feathered tracery of this beautiful fragment were alone clearly discernible. The forest-trees, and the dark outline of a massive turret, formed the background. Beds of flowers, clustering shrubs, and *corbeilles* of rare exotics, enriched and perfumed the verdant lawn in front.

Here, seeing all, himself unseen, Sir Frederick Mottram stopped, and seated himself on a rustic bench, under the wide-spreading branches of a giant oak, one of the leading features of the sylvan scene. Groups were passing in and out of the portico, and the inner apartment was occupied by a crowd of persons of both sexes. The hostess of the evening was occupied in arranging music on a piano-forte, which stood exactly in a line with the central open archway. Among the persons surrounding the instrument, Sir Frederick distinguished Colonel —, and other Polish gentlemen, the Italian exile whom he had met in the *treckschuyt*, Cholet, the delightful tenor of the *Pré aux Clercs*, Messrs. Fétis, Belliard, and other professors and amateurs of distinction, some of whom he had met at the house of Monsieur Engler on the preceding evening. Among the groups scattered through the room, he also recognised the striking head of the Minister of the Interior, Messieurs Gachard, Marchal, Van H—, Mr. Grattan,* and M. Moch, (to whose several writings Belgium stands equally indebted for investing it with new interest,) with Dr. Friedlander, (one of the most liberal and elegant German writers of the day,) and other foreign notabilities, who had been pointed out to him in the streets and public reading-rooms of Brussels. But, among this varied group, he saw no form to which

* The Heiress of Bruges, by Mr. Grattan, in historical research and local colouring, is comparable to many of Walter Scott's best pictures of national peculiarities.

he could assign his own vague and fantastic idea of the Princess of Schaffenhhausen; and he rejoiced at the fact. There was nothing in the scene which by the remotest association could recal the restraint imposed by his own exclusive circle and its cold despotic forms, to scare his eyes and grieve his heart! Everything around him was strange, new, unconnected with ancient habits and morbid feelings, as the site he occupied.

The tuning of musical instruments was now completed. Madame Marguerite had taken her place at the piano-forte, with a sweep of chromatic modulations which showed the science of a mistress of the art. He thought, as he listened, of her pictures, of her conversation; he looked at her person, irradiated as her splendid countenance then was, by sensations which music alone awakens in those organized for its enjoyments. Coquetry, too, could not have chosen a more appropriate dress than her usual, full, voluminous robe of rich black stuff, and her wonted *faillie*, thrown back from her head, and serving as a fine relief to her flashing eyes and sibyl face.

The music performed was a Polish hymn to liberty. The solo parts were sung by Madame Marguerite, in a deep, soul-touching contra-alto voice; the chorus, by the Polish and other foreign gentlemen. It was one of those calm and genial nights, when music acquires its fullest power over beings susceptible of its mysterious spells. Not a breath of air disturbed even the clear flame of a lamp which hung over a fountain, whose rills trickled round the roots of a huge, blighted elm, once the rival of the oak, under which Sir Frederick lounged.

The impressionable temperament of the late cold and arid statesman, (the slave of mental habits at variance with nature's intentions in his favour,) yielded to the enchantment of the fresh and scented atmosphere, and the witching of sweet sounds. He thought the melody of the Polish hymn was almost an argument in favour of the Polish cause; and even the liberation of classic Italy, and of honest Germany, stole on his affections as plausible and possible, through the passionate voices of men so gifted and so worthy to enjoy all that bounteous nature had created for their use.

The music ceased; the Belgians applauded. *They* had completed their great work, and their sympathies were offered with an unoffending expression of pity and admiration for their less fortunate

brothers. Refreshments were then served, and Madame Marguerite, circulating through her guests, advanced from the gallery to the portico, and from the portico to the open air. In the courteous *surveillance* of a society accustomed to receive those personal attentions which English *bon ton* has banished from its circles, she advanced to the last stragglers, with a pleasant word and a welcoming smile for each, till she reached the seat where Sir Frederick reposed. Her recognition was instantaneous and cordial.

“ Ah ! ” she said, “ you have selected your *bel respiro* well. I pray you mark the spot ; it is that on which Charles the Fifth took his last leave of his family, and of the allies of his power, the day he abdicated. What a group ! what a scene ! I have sketched it as the subject of a future picture. ”

“ The scene, ” said Sir Frederick, “ is exquisitely beautiful ; but the historical interest you now attach to it is infinitely more interesting. What a lesson on the vanity of human passions ! ”

“ And what a lesson of the vanity of that unlimited power beyond what man should trust with man ! ” she replied. “ Look at that German, that Italian, those Poles, all victims of the despotism still subsisting, still flourishing, which it was the ambition of Charles to establish ; for that he laboured and fought, and for what ?—to die of religious melancholy and ennui in a cloister ! The music, which still rings in my ears, is a fearful comment on the story. ”

“ The music you allude to breathes of sentiment, of passion, of enthusiasm ; but I do not see by what reasonable association it connects itself with the despotism (if so you will call it) of Charles the Fifth. ”

“ It breathes of human suffering, of national degradation, of force, of injustice ; and it but repeats the tale of centuries of wrong, enacted in every kingdom of continental Europe to this present day. And for whose benefit did the candidate for universal monarchy and unmixed despotism raise this superstructure of evil ? Think of the successors of Charles. The foundress of the stock was Joan the mad : Charles the Fifth died mad ; Philip the Second lived in ferocious delirium ; and his bigoted and stultified successors exhibited, in scarcely less striking characters, their intellectual monstrosity. *Au reste*, you were at the congress of Vienna, and can tell whether the successors to the power and the inheritors of the blood of the

universal monarchist are either better or happier than their predecessor."

Sir Frederick remained for a moment silent.

"You do not agree with me yet," said Madame Marguerite.

"Perhaps not," he said; "but I at least feel with you, and that is a preliminary step to agreement. That music of yours is a great rhetorician: and you have a mode of attacking the mind through the senses, which leaves it without the power or the wish of resistance."

"A great cause," she replied coldly, "should owe nothing to such sybarite accessories."

"And is not all here sybarite?" he said, endeavouring to detain her, by catching the floating end of her *faillie*, as she was in the act of passing him—"The air we breathe, the scene we occupy, the voice which penetrates to the innermost recesses of our existence, and turns life into a trance!"

"And observe," she said with animation, taking his offered arm; "pray observe that Nature is the fountain of all this; and that when you exclude her fresh vital breath, reverse her seasons, and, above all, neglect her great distinctions, for those of artificial society, you forfeit all the charms which now so much excite your rather excitable imagination. But I must make you known to some of our Belgian notabilities, our revolutionary ministers, past, present, and (I dare say) to come. I have nothing for you in the way of a Metternich, a Talleyrand, or a Montague St. Leger; nothing to set against the diplomatists I have seen filling the *salons* of the Princess of Schaffhausen in London and Vienna. Ours are the agents of the day, the necessities of the occasion, the springs of a new movement; and their characteristics are as peculiar as their position."

"Pray," he said, holding her back, as she approached a group at the portico, "let me for a while, at least, be a spectator, an auditor—an—"

"Oh! I won't *commit* you; nothing plebeian shall get between the wind and your gentility. Look at that energetic, gesticulating man, with a countenance all expression, and an eye all fire; I may present you to him: he is of the equestrian order—of *your* order," (she added with pointed expression.) "In England, he would be what the Princess calls '*Sare somebody*.' Is not that like her?"

“Too, too like her?” he replied, the whole scene in the Opera-box rushing on his memory.

“But Charles de Brouckere *s’en moque*,” she continued: “he has far other claims for distinction.”

“Is your Princess here?” asked Sir Frederick.

“Oh!” she said ironically; “princesses are *patronesses* of the arts. They *purchase* talent; but they do not enter with it into social equality. ‘*Ces gens-là*,’ as Madame Du Deffand called Voltaire and D’Alembert—‘*ces gens-là*’ make a part of the parade of aristocratic station, but do not enter into its intimacy: but you see here men worth all the *Altesses Bruxelloises* that ever flourished since the time of the D’Egmonts and the Hornes. Look to your left; you see that person talking to Constantine Rodenbach, whom you met at Bruges. It is Monsieur De Muelenaere.”

“One of your ministers, I believe,” observed Sir Frederick, putting up his glass.

“Il est, le fut, ou le doit être,”

replied Madame Marguerite, laughing; “for talent and energies like his must always be available in such great revolutionary times as the present. His best distinction is simply that of a pure patriot; he is, however, an historical fact.” *

“By the energy of their movements, they must be deciding the fate of the nation, at least.”

“They did so once,” said Madame Marguerite, seating herself on a mound of cushions, which, after the old Spanish-Brabantian fashion, were scattered on the lawn. Sir Frederick drew a tabouret beside her, much amused at the moving and characteristic scene before him. “But pray observe that group to your right.”

“I have been observing it some time,” said Sir Frederick.

“’Tis an odd coincidence,” she continued, “but there stands nearly the whole of the last provisional government of the Belgian

* “Lorsque MM. De Muelenaere et Vilain XIII furent écartés des états-généraux, lors des élections en 1829, on ouvrit spontanément, dans les Flandres, une souscription, pour leur offrir une médaille en or, à leur effigie.” — *Épisodes de la Révolution, etc. etc.*

Revolution. There is Charles Rogier, the Minister of the Interior, who, in the most awful moment of popular fermentation, flung himself into the very gap of anarchy, and established that character of dauntless devotedness to a great cause, which may be deemed the chivalry of politics. Next to him stands the brave, the gallant, the patriotic commander of the National Guard, the Baron Vander-Linden D'Hooghvorst; and there is the honest, single-minded, Count Felix de Mérode: he is in conversation with Colonel Jolly, who, from aiding to emancipate and govern a nation, is now contented to fall back upon the arts, and is the Director of the *Musée*. That venerable personage who is about to join them, is the ex-regent, Baron Surlet de Chokier. He comes but rarely amongst us, now that he has abdicated his public functions; but he deserves well of his country, and is in full possession of its respect. That elderly man near him is the Baron de Sécus, the Nestor of the Chamber of Deputies; and next to him is Count Robiano.”*

“ Oh! you admit, then, that the Belgian *noblesse* did come forward? for here are barons and counts in plenty.”

“ So few, on the contrary,” she interrupted, “ as to make the exceptions only more remarkable.”

“ But where is your equestrian? his countenance interested me.”

“ Ay! where indeed! He is ‘the movement’ personified; he has passed through every phasis of the Belgian Revolution, prominent in all, and giving to each something of his own characteristic energy; rapid as a meteor—as bright, and as unfixed; and, though shooting from sphere to sphere with incalculable celerity, always leaving the track of his light behind him: a patriot from sentiment, a *frondeur* from principle, and a lover of liberty and the arts from temperament.”

“ He has played, then, no ordinary part in your revolution.”

“ Oh! he started from the post, and a little before it. Called to the representation in 1827, he distinguished himself by a motion in favour of the liberty of the press, which was then compromised by an exceptional law,—an act of vigour which placed him in public

* At this time Monsieur Gendebien was in the country; and Monsieur Van de Weyer was in London, the Minister Plenipotentiary from his government to the English Court.

opinion at the head of the Belgian opposition. Conjointly with the Counts de Celles and de Langhe, he proposed, during the heat of the commotions of September 1830, the administrative separations of Belgium and Holland. He was, on various occasions, the chosen negotiator with the Prince of Orange, and successively Military Governor of the Province of Liège, Minister of Finance, (a place which he threw up on the proposed election of Leopold,) Minister of the Interior on Leopold's nomination, and afterwards, on the invasion of the territory, aide-de-camp to the King, when he succeeded in bringing together and re-arming ten thousand men of the dispersed and demoralized army after the affair of Louvain. At a moment of general confusion, when nobody would accept the portfolio of minister of war, it was almost forced on Monsieur de Brouckere. Still, however, he found himself placed in a false position, by the conflict of his duties and sentiments towards the King with his feelings and principles as a member of the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies; and he ultimately vacated his seat, and accepted the office of director of the mint, which, being disconnected with politics, he could hold without a compromise."

"You have given me," said Sir Frederick, "a reason the more for visiting the Hôtel de la Monnaie to-morrow, which I had already intended to do."

"Yes, and you will find the Master of the Mint as sharp-cut, as salient, and as fresh, as any of his own coins. There are various opinions of Charles de Brouckere; but I cannot help placing him in the first rank of national talent. He is accused, however, of wanting that sagacious submission to the pressure of events, that wise indulgence for the inconsistencies of men, which are indispensable for the conduct of all great enterprises. Honest, straightforward, seeing at once what ought to be, and taking a bird's-eye view of the circumstances of a position, a pebble thrown in his path may check his progress: he starts, draws up, neither stumbles nor retreats, but flies off at a tangent, indignant at the paltry obstruction. To the querulousness arising from the first check, he yields with the frowardness of a spoiled child; and with '*all or nothing*' for his motto, he makes the impossibility of attaining the first his excuse for falling back upon the last. It was this quality which induced King Leopold, with his usual tact, to say, '*Charles de*

Brouckere est un homme dont on ne peut rien faire, mais sans lequel on ne peut rien faire.’ Would you like to be presented to him now?”

“Not now,” said Sir Frederick, hanging back; “you see he is engaged, and with a person who looks like a *preux* of ancient chivalry, a ‘*jeune et beau Dunois*.’”

“You have hit him off well,” said Madame Marguerite.

“Felix Chazal is the Bayard of our revolution, ‘*sans peur et sans reproche*.’ Every trait of his short career is striking and elevated. The hero of the commotions at Mons, he at twenty-one years of age exhibited a presence of mind, a courage, and a diplomatic dexterity, that would have done honour to a veteran general. At Antwerp, in conjunction with his friend Rogier, he succeeded, by the firmness and decision of his manner, in extorting an armistice for the city. During several months of official disorganization and confusion, he, as intendant-general of the army, had immense sums at his disposition; yet he quitted his office in a poverty as honourable, as it is (under such circumstances) rare. He is now colonel commandant of the province of Liège.”

“And who is that intellectual young person, whose sedate air forms so striking a contrast with the physiognomies of the two fiery sons of republicanism?”

“’Tis Monsieur Nothomb, the historian of the revolution, in which he has borne himself a distinguished part. He is another instance of the political talent latent in the middle ranks of society, which awaits but the call of occasion to show itself for the benefit of mankind. A doctor of laws at the age of twenty-one, he shortly afterwards quitted his native country of Luxembourg (where he practised as an advocate), to commence journalist at Brussels. At the outbreak of the revolution, he became secretary of the constitutional committee, and was very influential in fixing the bases adopted for the Belgian constitution. In the congress, also, he defended the monarchical system with two chambers; and, being convinced that nothing but ruin could result from a war, he became an active partisan of what has been so inconsiderately censured as the system of protocols.”

“Yes,” interrupted Sir Frederick, “’twas the only chance. That was great foresight in so young a man.”

“ In March 1831 he became secretary of foreign affairs, and strongly advocated the election of Leopold. He was consequently chosen, together with Monsieur Devaux, a commissary to the conference in London, where they conjointly arranged with Lord Palmerston the celebrated eighteen articles of peace.”

“ I must, then, have seen him when in London,” said Sir Frederick : “ I thought his face was familiar to me. Pray go on.”

“ In every step of our revolution he has contributed largely towards determining its character ; and, being compelled by the necessities of the times to adopt the *juste-milieu*,* as the only system compatible with the permanence of national independence, he, of course, has constantly been employed, and has shown himself an active member of the government, and a firm and useful supporter of its measures in the Chamber. Replete with acquired information, and endowed with a singular perspicacity of judgment, he has acquired great influence with his party both in the cabinet and the chamber ; and in his work, which you have doubtless read, he has as ably as elegantly defended the revolution before the tribunal of continental Europe.”

“ His book,” said Sir Frederick, “ affords the clearest insight into the origin and tendency of your revolution that I have yet acquired. It is marked throughout by a moderation and good sense, that gave me the impression of a more mature and practised mind than so youthful a person should indicate.”

“ The Belgians,” she continued, “ though some think him too much a *doctrinaire*, are justly proud of his talents ; and, as a member of private society, he is not the less gay, *spirituel*, and unpretending, than he is laborious and able in office : unlike some of your English rising young men, as you call them, who ‘ *cachent la médiocrité sous le masque de la gravité.*’ ”

“ He, I suppose,” said Sir Frederick, “ is one of your working men ? ”

“ Our ministers,” she replied, “ are all working men : Belgium is too poor to afford the luxury of aristocratic show servants. There, for instance, that tall, studious-looking person, is Monsieur Lebeau,

*Whatever may be thought of France and England, the *juste-milieu* was forced upon Belgium by inevitable circumstances.

minister of Justice, who passes for the leader of our cabinet, and the very spirit of the *juste-milieu*. Like his friend Nothomb, doctor of laws, advocate, journalist, and author, he was the first individual singled out for office by the provisional government, which appointed him advocate-general in the supreme court of justice at Liège. He was one of the committee of safety formed in that city to protect property and avert anarchy, on the breaking out of the revolution ; and he was also of the deputation sent by the inhabitants of Liège to treat with the Prince of Orange for the administrative separation of the two countries. Subsequently, he was chosen on the committee for drawing up the constitution ; and he has continued ever since an influential member of the cabinet. As a statesman, cool, cautious, and astute, he has laboured to consolidate the system which the geographical and political circumstances of the country have forced on its adoption. He has with infinite tact and adroitness laboured to conciliate the timid and suspicious allies who have agreed to acknowledge, without loving, the revolutionary government ; and, in doing this, he has not retrograded into that semi-legitimacy which has depopularized the government of Louis-Philippe. That, indeed, the Belgian people would not have endured. As an orator, Monsieur Lebeau is the main stay of the administration. He is always heard in the Chambers with attention and respect ; as uniting with a persuasive and energetic oratory, a penetrating intellect, a singular tact, and a compassed solid sense. In temperament and disposition he is the opposite of his friend Rogier. The latter, bold, frank, simple, all impulse and sentiment, was well suited to the moment of action, which drew him from the ranks of an arduous professional life ; the former, reflective, cautious, almost Machiavelian, is better suited to treat with the corrupted cabinets of old Europe, and to parry their fence by a *finoterie* not inferior to their own. Rogier is the poetry, Lebeau the prose, of the revolution."

"The poetry of the revolution ?" said Sir Frederick, shaking his head.

"What !" said Madame Marguerite, "do you think that revolutions are made by the cold-blooded ? Are great changes impressed on society by mathematical calculation ? The enthusiasm which placed Charles Rogier in the most perilous predicaments, was the

quality most wanting in the moment of conflict. Parties may disagree upon shades of opinion ; the ministers of to-day may be inapplicable to the exigencies of to-morrow, in times of such rapid transition ; but Belgium should never forget the men who threw themselves headlong into her cause at a moment when everything that was cold and calculating deserted it.* Much of the purity and success of our revolution is owing to its having fallen into the hands of such men as these ; to the happy circumstance that none of the fragments of the old diplomacy of Europe meddled with it. The men who made it were in earnest : they had no reminiscences, no second thoughts. One Mirabeau, one Metternich, would have spoiled the whole affair. It was not a democratic movement merely, but a revolution of knowledge, directed by the enlightened class ; with whom science was not subordinate to craft, nor virtue stifled by precedent."

Sir Frederick, though amused and even interested, still listened with an air of incredulous attention, as one who sought to shelter his prejudices under his scepticism.

" You asked me," he said, " to meet a society of artists ; but since the time of your illustrious namesake Marguerite of the Low Countries, no lady was ever so intrenched with ministers."

" Oh ! yes," she said, pointedly ; " the Portsmouths and the

* On the 20th of September the *Garde Bourgeoise* was disarmed, and all the authorities dispersed ; the 23rd was the first day of the battle of Brussels ; and it was in the midst of this scene of carnage and of anarchy that a provisional government was formed. Of this, the following proclamation affords the evidence.

" PROCLAMATION.

" Depuis deux jours Bruxelles est dépourvue de toute espèce d'autorité constituée : l'énergie et la loyauté populaire en ont tenu lieu. Mais tous les bons citoyens comprennent qu'un tel état de choses ne peut durer sans compromettre la ville et le triomphe d'une cause dont le succès d'hier a été assuré.

" Des citoyens guidés par le seul amour du pays ont accepté provisoirement un pouvoir, qu'ils sont prêts à remettre en des mains plus dignes, aussitôt que les élémens d'une autorité nouvelle seront réunis. Ces citoyens sont MM. LE BARON VANDERLINDEN D'HOOGHVORST, de Bruxelles ; CH. ROGIER, avocat, de Liège ; et JOLLY, ancien officier du génie.

" Ils ont pour secrétaires MM. DE COPPEN et VANDERLINDEN, de Bruxelles.

" Bruxelles, 24 septembre, 1830."

Suffolks in your country, in past times : and, methinks, *I* have seen in London women of no greater capacity than my own carrying on a sort of diplomacy of the boudoir, ministeresses of the backstairs, with nothing to distinguish their heads but the coronets that bound them. I have seen women, and so have you, who had yet their *LASCIA PASSARE*, to councils of state and faction, by qualifying for their position, just as the Suffolks and the Portsmouths had done before them. But what surprises you, Sir Frederick, is, that men in power should surround a woman, who has no one worldly distinction to recommend her."

"I see, I feel I have offended you, Madame Marguerite," he interrupted ; " but I will be frank. There is not one among your guests more alive, perhaps, I should say, more infatuated by your talents, than myself ; yet, I *am* a little surprised that a professional artist should form the centre of a circle composed of such authorities as one only expects to meet in the salons of rank or the chambers of royalty."

" But you forget, Sir Frederick, that these are men who have risen from the class to which I belong. They are what your cabinets would call *roturiers*. In England, the whole political machine stops when you cannot get a lord to govern the springs, or a duke to direct the moving power. It is impossible to make you, or your caste, feel this ; *mais brisons là*."

She rose as she spoke, and advanced towards the portico.

" *En dame qui tient bien son salon*, (as Napoleon termed it,) I must now circulate among my guests."

Sir Frederick offered her his arm ; but she declined it.

" You want to shake me off," he said, laughing ; " but zeal is not enough for proselytism ; perseverance is equally necessary : and I have yet," he added, pausing in search of some inquiry to detain her, " so many things to ask, that I cannot so easily dismiss the Pythoness from her tripod ! Your ministers are fortunate fellows, with women to eulogize, and no opposition to embarrass them."

" Eulogize ! I only speak of them as necessary agents ; and, up to the moment you see them, I will not answer for men, and, above all, for men in power. Fortunately for themselves, they have an opposition, a *spirituel* and a spirited opposition ; though not a party business, such as your English oppositions often are. There is, it is true,

a catholic opposition and a liberal opposition here, each making its own attack on the ministers, and often blaming them for the most opposite faults ; but this is not a conspiracy against their places. and to support goes on his own tack, and does not hesitate to praise Every man here where he can."

"The sure sign," said Sir Frederick, "of their newness to affairs."

"Yes : that newness is their salvation. But, listen : there, is a spell that unites all parties in Belgium !"

"What divine music !" he exclaimed. "The waltz, in its measure, exerts some strange mystic charm on the organization of us Northerns."

A fine band was playing the melting measure of a beautiful waltz, of that marked and elaborate character which this species of music has received at the hands of the great modern masters.

"How delicious !" said Sir Frederick. "Pray, do not leave me, Madame Marguerite ; the air, the perfume of the flowers, the moving music of your own voice—this is life, enjoyment ineffable !"

"And how cheaply purchased !" said Madame Marguerite ; "something cheaper than the faded flowers of Covent-garden, Collinet's band, and peas at a guinea a quart."

"Don't talk of it," said Sir Frederick, with an expression of infinite disgust.

"All here is the spontaneous offering," she said, "of unpurchasable talent. That waltz is the composition of your accomplished Polish friend ; another gifted Pole is at the piano-forte ; and the rest of the band are all young Belgians, members of the amateur music of Brussels."

"And who is that, not very young, but very animated and graceful person, who talks to one of the fair waltzers?"

"An illustrious Polish magnate, Count P —, the head of one of the noblest families of Poland, by descent, by patriotism, and by valour ; of a family, too, illustrated by the glorious devotion of a woman. The heroic deeds of the Countess P., his kinswoman, will shed a glow upon the history of her country, which not all the power of Russia can cloud or conceal from posterity !"

Sir Frederick was irresistibly affected by the unexpected appearance of the noble Pole, under circumstances so much at variance

with his own preconceived ideas of expatriated nobility.

“And there,” said Madame Marguerite, pointing to a light and elegant figure, as it whirled by them : “that dark, intelligent, but now reeling head, belongs to our opposition. ’Tis Henry de Brouckere, the brother of Charles ; more measured than him, but not, perhaps, less patriotic or gifted. You must hear him speak. He is followed in the dance by the archi-liberal deputy Ernst. He is now passing two of our best and most brilliant *frondeurs*, Jullien and Fallon. They are in conversation under the archway : let the Abbé de Foere and the Catholic party look to it.”

“But will you not waltz yourself?” said Sir Frederick, passing his arm round Madame Marguerite’s waist.

She shrunk from the encircling fold, with a shudder disproportioned to an act in which a whole society was engaged with enthusiasm : for in Belgium, as in Germany, the waltz knows no distinction of age, rank, or sex ; and all yield to its intoxicating involvements, its delicious undulations :

“Pair by pair, and group by group, unite :
The fairest forms in thousand-folded light
Still twinkle to and fro.” *

Sir Frederick drew back, hurt, offended.

“At least,” he said, picking up his hat, “let me not prevent you from doing the honours of your assembly, or distinguishing some of your guests by your selection.”

She touched the cordon of an order which hung gracefully over her bosom. “You see,” she said, “I must not dance.”

“You must belong to a very rigid order,” he replied, coldly. “I remember, some years back, dancing with a very pretty young *chanoinesse* at Vienna, in the full costume of the *Dames Nobles* of Frankfort.”

“But I am not a pretty young *chanoinesse* of the *Dames Nobles* ; I have passed through too dreary a noviciate for the order I profess, to indulge in any such intoxicating gaieties. But look around you ! There is the beautiful Madame—— of Bruges ; there is the

* Wieland’s Oberon.

truly elegant Madame Q——, with a toilet as Parisian as if fresh from the hands of Victorine ; and there is an aristocratic belle, the handsomest woman in Belgium, the Countess——.”

“ I do not mean to waltz,” said Sir Frederick, peevishly.

“ Then you must move out of the way ; for here they come : neither grass nor gravel will form any impediment.”

As she spoke, the animating influence of the waltz of Guillaume Tell gave a new *élan* to the rotatory movements of the party ; and the happy Belgians, escaping beyond the fretted roof and pointed arches of the gothic portico, were now dancing over the very site where the tyrants and executioners of their forefathers, with their dusky Numidian guest, once sat in gloomy state, amidst prostrate slaves and kneeling courtiers.

Passing into the gallery behind the portico, Madame Marguerite gave to her guest a new impression of the talent by which she was surrounded, by pointing his attention to several glowing pictures of the modern school, which the liberality and kindness of her brother artists had contributed as ornaments of the night's fête. A cattle-piece of Verboeckhoven exhibited all the truth and fidelity of Paul Potter, united with an ideality, of which Potter had not a conception, and of which such subject seem hardly capable. There, too, was the great Scripture subjects of Wappers, destined to figure in the exhibition of the coming *anniversaire*, and to recall the ancient reputation of the Flemish school,—the school of Rubens and of Quilenus. There, too, were several cabinet pictures of landscapes, of perfect beauty and execution, the works of the modern school.

While gazing on these exquisite specimens, Sir Frederick's attention was called off, that he might be presented to their authors ; and their intelligent and unaffected conversation heightened even the impression made by their works. In reply to his questions on the state of the market, in that sense by which the staple commodities of genius, as of vulgarer minds, must eventually be tried, he learned that the arts in Belgium could hope but for little support from the government ; and that the wealthy burghers of Brussels, and the manufacturers of Ghent, Liége, and the other industrial communities, were the best patrons, (that is, purchasers,) of the works of compatriot genius.

The group of artists which now surrounded Madame Marguerite and her English guest was from time to time increased by other persons, attracted by the presence of the hostess. Among the most distinguished of these was the astronomer royal (as he would be termed in England), Monsieur Quetelet, whose learned writings and European reputation had not prepared Sir Frederick for the mild simplicity of manner, the frank and benevolent cheeriness, which his conversation and address so favourably evinced. When will the world learn that modesty is the true mantle of genius; and cease to run after solemn plausibility and arrogating pretension; those infallible attributes of shallowness and inferiority?

Monsieur Lesbroussarts, the *chef d'instruction publique*, was presented to Sir Frederick, as one capable of giving him the best information upon a subject which must now occupy a prominent place in the inquiries of the sensible traveller, as it will in the views of such statesmen as must for the future be selected for the government of reforming Europe, — the education of the people.

The Baron de Stassart, the Belgian La Fontaine, whose *naïve* poetry resolved itself into very vigorous prose during the fierce contests of the revolution, and whose merits are rather obscured than illustrated by his post of president of the senate, at once engaged and fixed the attention of the British ex-minister, by the various information he so readily imparted, and by the polite and pleasing address of the man of the world and practised diplomatist. The Counts Vilain XIII., De Mérode, and D'Arschot, the deputies C. Rodenbach, Devaux, and Jullien, were each severally presented; and a general conversation ensued, in which the reigning topics were discussed in a manner that gave to the foreigner the most favourable impressions of a nation and a society that could produce such specimens of its culture and talents. The announcement of carriages broke up the circle, just as Madame Marguerite returned, after an interval of absence, to do the honours by her English guest.

“ You must know the Baron de Stassart,” she said, “ for many reasons : first, for his own sake, because he has passed through scenes the most singular and momentous, with honour to himself and advantage to his country; and next, because he may be of

use to you, when you pass through Namur. He is governor of the province; and then, when you return for the great national fête. . . .”

“ But,” he interrupted with impatient vehemence, “ where am I to go?—when to return? for by this time you must be convinced that my movements are no longer under my own direction.”

“ Under whose, then ?” she asked gaily.

“ Yours,” was the abrupt reply.

“ Mine !” She shrugged, and hummed in a low voice,

“ ‘ Ma foy, aultre part i’ay promis ;
C’est quit à quit, et bons amis.’ ”

“ You are taken in the fact, Madame Marguerite,” said a young Belgian amateur. “ Every one present is dying to hear you sing the madrigal which you have discovered in the album of the *Damoiselles de Behercke* and *Wilhelma del Vaël*. ”

“ And set to such an appropriate melody,” added Monsieur Fétis, in the indulgence of true talent.

“ Well, who will give me their arm to the piano ?” she asked, looking round.

Every arm was offered : Sir Frederick’s was taken ; and his eyes (as she sang in her sweet, deep, contralto voice) were alternately riveted on her face and on the paper placed before her on the music-desk ; where, in the good old French, written and spoken in the court of the Duchess Marguerite, were copied the following lines from the album of the sixteenth century :—

CHANSON.

Vostre humeur m’a point fasché ,
Pour vous cognoistre distraicte ;
Ma foy , j’estois bien empesché
De faire un’ honeste retraicte ;
Ma foy , aultre part i’ay promis—
C’est quit à quit , et bons amis.

Je ne vous aimois seulement
Que pour vous cognoistre muable ;

Je suis subiect au changement,
Car chacun aime son semblable ;
Ainsy n'y a-t-il de crime commis—
C'est quit à quit, et bons amis.

Lorsque i'estois votre cœur ,
Seul aussi vous esties mon ame ;
Je changeois de serviteur
Lorsque vous changies de dame :
Le changement nous est permis—
C'est quit à quit , et bons amis.

Adieu , nous nous verrons un jour ,
Pour raconter de nos fortunes ;
Oblions donques nos amours ,
Quoy qu'elles soient bien importunes :
Qui plus y pert , plus y a mis—
C'est quit à quit , et bons amis.

There was something in the words of this song that went home to the heart and bosom of Sir Frederick Mottram with an effect the most inexplicable. It not only entranced him by the arch and emphatic manner in which it was sung, but it seemed to have a particular and personal application, that plunged him back into past events, and confused and involved him in a reverie that left him alone at the piano-forte, with his eyes and thoughts riveted on the written words of a song composed near three centuries back.

Meantime, Madame Marguerite, overwhelmed by the brilliant plaudits which had followed her exquisite song, had taken the arm of the illustrious Count Plater, and escaped from the hot and crowded gallery into the open air.

It was some time before Sir Frederick found her alone, and standing near the portico. Either she did not, or affected not to observe his approach; for she moved on to a marble vase filled with bouquets of fresh flowers, from which she was selecting a bunch of *pensées*, as he reached and addressed her.

“ You perceive, Madame Marguerite,” he said abruptly, “ that you make your ‘ *honeste retraicte* ’ in vain.”

She presented him the flowers she had culled, with a smiling and expressive air.

“I do not want your *pensées*,” he said, rejecting the offering peevishly; “I am suffocated by my own. Look at the effect of that moonlight breaking into silver fragments on the dark masses of the forest, and lighting up a sort of natural arcade of tempting freshness: will you trust yourself with one so dull and miserable, for a moonlight ramble of half-an-hour?”

“An arcade!” said Madame Marguerite, “it is what *we* call a *wolf-tract*! I will not venture!” And she turned away; but he intercepted her path.

“You must hear me for a moment,” he said vehemently; “and then, if you will, ‘*quit à quit*,’ but not ‘*bons amis*!’—nay, you had best stay and hear me: or, go where you will, I shall follow you, like your shadow, if indeed shadow you have.”

“Oh! you take me for Madame Peter Schlemil!” she replied gravely. “Well, once for all, speak, and I will answer.”

She permitted him to draw her arm under his, as they walked to and fro amid the illuminated trees.

“First, then; when does your Princess leave Brussels? what is her route, and what do you know of my wife’s projected visit to her friend’s castle on the Rhine? Of course, you know everything—influence even their puppet movements; you are of their confederacy.”

“You do me too much honour,” she said. “Madame Marguerite the artist, who lives, or rather, who has hitherto lived, by her labour, might be permitted to serve, but never admitted to the equality of confidence with such high and puissant dames. I know, however, that the Princess had a letter from Lady Frances Mottram, to announce her intended arrival, wind and weather permitting, in a few days. But, doubtless, you also have heard from her to the same purport?”

“No, indeed I have not. But, pray lay aside for once your tone of mystification, your jesuitism, and answer me frankly. Do you accompany this idle, frivolous, and dissipated party, who make their tour to that eternal Rhine an excuse for the neglect of every duty at home? Am I to understand that this is your last evening at Brussels?”

“It was to have been. But the Princess of Schaffhausen means now to await the arrival of her English friends; and has taken a

hint from my *soirée*, to give them a fête here before they proceed. It is to be a sort of court dinner, *à la grande Duchesse*; and we are to scour the country for a d'Aremberg, a d'Ursel, a Trazigny, or any fragment of the *Altesses Bruxelloises* we can collect. In short, we are to toast the *Orange Boven* in draughts of Metternich's Johannisberg, and show our contempt of citizen kings, republican ministers, and *roturier* society, *à toute outrance*! I should not wonder if we formed the nucleus of a counter-revolution."

"Psha! nonsense! Your Princess is mad, or something worse! But what are you, who hang upon her protection, and administer to her—her follies, her caprices, to say the least of them?"

"Alas! I am, what we all are—the creature of circumstances, an atom in the vortex of events: and, whatever you may think, or the world suppose, the Princess of Schaffenhausen has been everything to me. I owe to her the bread I eat, the air I breathe. It was her effort, her exertion, that rescued me from want, from crime, perhaps,—and, oh! too certainly, from despair."

"Good God! how you talk!" said Sir Frederick, more touched by the passionate melancholy of her voice, than by the words she uttered: "with your talents, your intellect, it must always have depended on yourself to command success."

"You would not say so, if you knew my story," she said, sighing deeply. "It is one of the sad and incredible romances of real life, which fiction would shrink from relating. It is a story of strange incidents, from the moment of my birth in the Hospital of St. John of Bruges, to the moment in which here, in the Forest of Soignes, within view of that glittering fabric, of those brilliant and joyous groups, I now lean on your arm. Seduced into confidence by words so winning, by a voice that is itself seduction, I am led to forfeit some of the unblenching spirit that has hitherto borne me above the weakness of complaint, and to confess to you that I have been crushed to the earth, to a state more humble than that of the worm that crawls on it; for I once occupied that bed in the parish work-house, where you shed tears over the——"

"I cannot let you go on—not for a moment, at least," said Sir Frederick, in great emotion.

She too was weeping. He led her forward, grasping with a convulsive movement the hand which hung over his arm. They had

proceeded a few moments in silence ; the lights in the pavilion shone dimly through the intervening trees ; they were at the opening of a glen, with ' thickets overgrown, grotesque and wild,' and he was still hurrying her on with, perhaps, unconscious and unintentional rapidity. His breath was short, his step uncertain, and his thoughts a chaos of remembrances, conjectures and doubts, the flash of new convictions, and the influence of passions, to which mind and imagination now lent their dangerous spells : yet he was silent.

" No, " said Madame Marguerite, sternly, and suddenly drawing up ; " I will go no farther. Let us stop here. Here we have still the forest and its vast silence around us ; the pure light of that sparkling firmament above us : here we are still in the presence of the upholders of an ennobling cause, of the defenders of an emancipated people. If you are sufficiently interested for me, to listen to a few details, which may in future place us in the only position in which we can stand towards each other, seat yourself here. Shall I go on ? "

" Not, " he said, throwing himself on a bank beside the shattered trunk of an oak on which she was now seated, " not until—come what come may—I unequivocally declare my admiration, my gratitude, my passionate devotion ! Vague, mysterious, almost awful as are the emotions of this moment, one sentiment is predominant ; partaking of all that friendship has most permanent, and love most ardent. Whatever may be the result of such an avowal to one so cold, so regulated, so proud, and so ambitious ; for all this, I am aware you are—I know not : but, in a word, Madame Marguerite, I—I love you ! "

" You said so once before, " she replied, " in such a spot, on such a night as this ! "

" But not to you—not to you, " he exclaimed, trembling with an emotion so strange, so wild, as to shake his whole frame,— " I guess—I know to whom you allude ; but to adore you, is to offer a tribute to her merits ! There is a resemblance between you ; a strange and almost maddening resemblance, which has long struck me ; which convinces me that the unfortunate, whose eyes you closed, was some way related to you. But there is still a difference between what you are, and what she was, as wide as between the all I felt then, and the all I feel now ; between the effervescence of boyish

caprice, and the deep-seated, high-directed, irrevocable devotedness of manhood; of that age, when man is in the prime of passion, as of reason: and when woman, retaining the charm of youth, gives to its allurements the more binding spell of mind. Oh! you have seen and known too much, not to have discovered that all which is worth possessing in this melancholy farce, in which we are forced to play a blind and mysterious part—the all that is really good, is such a union as it is possible for us to form. I beseech you, hear me out! You are no longer a girl; and I am, in mind, even older than in years. We have both been miserable; we have been so, according to your bitter allusion, from an early estrangement from your goddess, Nature. Let us return, then, to her dictates, to her laws, while yet her best gifts are ours. I am weary of the world: the world is weary of me. I have found you here, in a region of enchantment. All that is beautiful in nature, all that is intoxicating in art, surrounds you; but the paradise is only borrowed. Yours to-night, but whose to-morrow? A woman's, who has won it by arts you have scorned to practise; a woman who, were she worthy to be your friend, your protectress, would not now be mistress here. Let me, then, press upon your apprehension the uncertainty of your tenure of the favour of this bad or foolish woman; the possibility of falling back, and at a time of life when the energies of youth, the moral force of that prime of womanhood you are now enjoying, may—can no longer exist, upon unavailing and unrequited industry. I have shed tears in the dreary darksome room of the sublime paintress of the incidents of the Four Days; and I know what you have endured, what you must again endure, should your capricious Princess drop you, as she took you up. Let me press on you, then, the prospect of that worst of all human miseries—the isolation, the desolation of unprovided old age, ‘*la Vieillesse Malheureuse*,’ the hospital, the workhouse! You shudder; but remember, what beauty, what sensibility, what talents—”

“—We have seen brought there!” interrupted Madame Marguerite, in a deep, low voice, and covering her face with her hands.

“Well! — yes—we have. But instead of making that a subject of eternal reproach to me, use it as a warning, an example, a possibility for yourself. Listen to that divine music; look at that sybarite scene: they are but the borrowed sources of a transient delight.

But there are regions as delicious, music as divine, luxuries as refined, and minds as honest, as those you have here collected round you : and, for your own sex, you are already beyond and above them. In London, you may still have your wits, your authors, your artists, your statesmen, about you. Then let me implore you to reflect that there is a noble fortune, a devoted heart, at your disposal ; and that upon whatever terms you may please to accept it, I offer you a life of——”

“ —Infamy !” she interrupted, coolly.

“ What jargon !” he replied, in a tone of deep provocation.

“ You would call it so, if offered to your wife,” she said.

“ Good God ! there is no communing with you. If these are your opinions, if these are your prejudices, why have you thrown yourself in my way ? why have you sought to pique me into passion, to warm me into the highest order of admiration ? why have you taken pains to display a mind that has commanded my respect, a mysterious conduct that has worked on my imagination, talents that have enraptured my senses, and graces that have lent themselves to every transition ? You cannot suppose that I am such a dolt as to believe that you have done this, all this, in a spirit of fanatical liberalism, to work a political conversion, and bring over one proselyte to a cause in which you can have no interest beyond that of abstract opinion !”

“ Why not ?” said Madame Marguerite, spiritedly. “ What have not women done for religious proselytism ! what are they not doing every day ! What oceans have they not been tossed on ! what distant regions have they not traversed ! what deserts have they not perished in !”

“ Religion !” he said ; “ that is another thing.”

“ Be it so : but have earthly interests no claims on our sympathies ? Is that great faith which concerns entire humanity, the greatest happiness of society itself, to have no female advocate ? Is the moral, social, and political elevation of the species mere opinion, ever to be discussed, and never acted on ? Oh ! trust me, sir ; if I have had the designs you attribute to me, they would have been a noble mission ! But the plain fact is, that impulse, not system, has dictated all that I have said, that bears on the country of my accidental birth and free selection. Belgium has been misrepresented to England ! The old cabinets of Europe have spared no pains to betray

her cause, or to vilify her upholders! You are among those who influence opinion! You belong to a party, sovereign by its wealth over that branch of the British press, which sells its honour, its independence, the interests of humanity, at a price! You are listened to from the benches of the British senate; and though no man is changed, save by time, and the workings of his own perceptions, still the way may be cleared for him, for the free and fair exercise of his faculties. You have accused me of throwing myself in your way! I have but availed myself of the coincidence of our pursuits, and of our travelling contingencies. Had you ever painted a picture, or composed a tale, you would understand how admirably accident produces effects, and combines events, which might appear the results of deep and well-directed study. As one attached to the order of the *Béguines*, and wearing the habit when I perform its offices, I have frequently crossed your path under circumstances too amusing to escape my wayward fancy; and I have availed myself of them to the full bent of my joyous humour, at your expense. I rated you in the hospital at Bruges; I piqued your self-love in the *treckschuyt* at Ghent; I met you in the tower of Charles the Fifth; gave you my blessing on the Kantur, and mystified you in the church of St. Beghé!"

"So," exclaimed Sir Frederick, folding his arms and throwing himself back, "you are, then, as I often suspected, la Sœur Greite! But pray go on."

"Our mutual love of the arts has more than once brought us also together, when it was in my power, at least, to amuse you; and the Princess's loitering mode of travelling, her various stations—for she is a *semi-dévotée*, and has her casino in the Béguinage of Ghent, her apartment *à la Du Deffand* in her St. Joseph, in Namur, and a *pied-à-terre* wherever taste or caprice may direct; her interests, too—for she is busy improving her property in the neighbourhood of Brussels."

"So, then, all was accident, caprice, the whim of the moment, or the habit of mystification?"

"I do not say that," observed Madame Marguerite, dropping her voice and eyes; "I do not say that there was not an *arrière-pensée*, a passion which, to a woman's heart, is——"

"Gracious Heaven!" said Sir Frederick, seizing her hands; "why

not begin there? and having come to that, why should we not understand each other at once?"

After a moment's pause, she said, coldly, withdrawing her hands, "I will tell you why."

"Well," he said, with peevish impatience; "now, then, for more logic, more finesse, more eloquence, and another jesuitical *escapade*."

"Are you disposed to hear me? or shall we return to the company?"

"Oh, certainly, disposed—most disposed. Patience perforce, I am willing to hear what you may have to—mystify me further with."

"It is no mystification," said Madame Marguerite, in a voice of some emotion; "it shall be a brief detail."

Sir Frederick again seated himself.

"The great movement of Europe, amidst its direful epic, has presented many episodes of domestic romance which fiction would scarcely have dared to imagine. A young Irishman, with gentle blood in his veins, and all the excitements of the troublous times of Ireland beating at his heart, joined the standard of rebellion in Ninety-eight. Escaping from an ignominious death, he entered into the French service; and, with the usual fate of a stranger and a refugee, spilt his blood thanklessly, and fell unrequited, almost unknown. The distinguishing feature of his short, gallant, and luckless life, was his imprudent union with an illustrious Polish lady, who, an exile like himself, had followed her veteran father, the friend of Kosciusko, through the campaign of Ninety-nine. In a moment of alarm and danger, she had been rescued from a band of Cossacks by the Irishman, and she recompensed his chivalrous protection with (all she had to give) her heart and hand. His death, which happened when she was on the point of becoming a mother, left her bereft of everything; and, in obedience to his injunctions, she proceeded to seek a wealthy lady in England, his sister, one whose life, like his own, had been one of vicissitude. She had reached Bruges on her way to England, when her resources became exhausted, and her strength failed her. Reduced to the last point of destitution, she was visited by the sisters of the Béguinage, and by them conveyed to the Hospital of St. John; and there, giving birth to a daughter, she—died.

“ The orphan child inherited from its hapless parent nothing but a tablet with a few memoranda, a golden reliquary, and a seal with a crest and an Irish motto. She was baptised by the name of the saint on whose day she was presented at the font, and was taken home by the Sisters to their Béguinage. Becoming the plaything of the Sisterhood, she displayed such talents as interested their feelings, and promised many future advantages from such a person becoming a member of an order then fast falling into insignificance. Quick and passionate in all pursuits, her residence at Bruges and Ghent was favourable to the acquirement of arts which were congenial to her temperament.

“ She had attained to her fifteenth year in all the force of health and precocity of character, which a life so active and practical as hers was calculated to produce, when the Abbess of the convent of English ladies at Bruges applied to the *Béguines* for a young person who could act as a *dame de compagnie* to a Catholic lady of rank, and superintend the education of her daughter. The name of the lady was that which was written in the tablets of the orphan's mother ; and the Sisters saw a strange coincidence in the fact, and gave their young *protégée* permission to accept the office.

“ There was something extraordinary in the reception of the young Béguine on her arrival in England. When the certificates of her birth and baptism, her seal, reliquary, and memoranda were spread before her new protectress, they excited an attention and interest far disproportionate to the seeming occasion. Numerous questions were asked of her, but asked in vain. All she had learned of herself from the good Sisters who had brought her up, was the name of her parents, and the date of their marriage, which was registered in her tablets ; and the first interview ended in an extorted promise of secrecy concerning the circumstances of her birth and breeding, save only as regarded the name of her noble mother, which was given to herself. The grave, plain habit in which she had arrived was exchanged for that beautiful and splendid Polish costume in which she is represented in that fine picture painted of her at his own request by Hopner, which once decorated the walls of the crimson room at Mottram Hall.”

“ This unavailing cruelty,” exclaimed Sir Frederick, “ what has it to do with present circumstances ? You knew, then, this Polish-

Flemish girl in your Béguinage ; you were contemporaries, and no doubt in some way related,—a half-sister, perhaps——”

“ You promised to hear me out,” interrupted Madame Marguerite. “ The part afterwards played by the little Polish girl, found amidst the snows of Russia, and exhibited in the fashionable circles of London by tonish sensibility, was rehearsed in Mottram Hall. Its beautiful mistress was a true Irishwoman, prone to all manner of excitement, greedy of sensation, and full of aristocratic *prestiges*. She showed off the grand-daughter of the friend of Kosciusko, turned her misfortunes to a romance, and deceived her coarse, astute, and bigoted Protestant husband,—who hated all that was Catholic in religion or liberal in politics, — to believe whatever she pleased.

“ The girl had become her passion ; and when her son arrived for his first vacation from Oxford, his ‘ boyish caprice’ for her was laughed at, and encouraged, by the imprudent mother, till it assumed a serious form. An offer of marriage was made at a distant day, ratified by a written contract, signed, sealed, and sworn to, on such a night, at such an hour, and in such a place as this. There was but one witness—an unexpected, an unseen witness,—the mother of the young *parvenu*, who then disclosed to him the secret of her niece’s birth and previous vocation. In vain she opposed to her son’s passion her own objections, and the circumstances of the case ; and, as a last resource, she confessed the whole to her obdurate husband. The young man was sent from home, an *attaché* to Vienna. The object of his ‘ boyish caprice,’ maddened by insolent contumely and coarse reproach, was turned adrift, to labour, beg, or perish, as she might. The simple habits of her former life had become disgustful : she had learned to love, to live, as if life were but a splendid trance ; and when she was thus rudely awakened from her transient dream of bliss, another no less powerful excitement—indignation, seized on her being, in all the force in which it seizes on high-minded and feeling spirits, when thus oppressed, deceived, and wronged. Helpless, hopeless, with none to vouch for or to recommend her, her talent and acquirements availed her nothing. Still she strove to work her way to an honest subsistence. But in that most humiliating, that only line open to female industry, which unites all that is confidential in trust with all that is servile in

position,—her very appearance was against her. Her extreme youth, her personal attractions, were insuperable impediments in her way. Besides, there was a brand upon her : she was born in a foreign land, heaving with revolutionary convulsion ; she inherited her mother's temperament, and her father's kindling imagination ; and even when her accomplishments opened to her the *salons* of the wealthy, the poetry of her song and the subject of her pencil furnished time-serving envy with the occasions to mark her for proscription.

“ But your feelings writhe under these details : to the result, then. Disappointment, failure, poverty, sickness, a wretched asylum, and, to finish life as she began it—an hospital bed.”

“ There, there ! ” interrupted her agitated auditor ; “ let that suffice : let your desire and power to torture rest satisfied with the pangs they have inflicted : let your tale of vengeance end there ! ”

“ But it did not so end ; — she escaped in delirium from the workhouse ; was received, sheltered, and when at length restored to comparative health, enabled to return to Bruges, by one whom sorrow had made compassionate — a poor Sister of Charity passing through London from Ireland on her way to Bruges. There the wanderer resumed the habit and profession of her indulgent order, but more as a protection than a vocation ; and there were no qualifying, or rather disqualifying, institutions to impede her way ; she became an artist of some note, — economized sufficient means to study in Italy, and, on her return, attracted the attention of a distinguished amateur—the Prince of Schaffenhhausen. His orders were munificent, calculated to inspire and to recompense genius. But he stopped not there—he had other views ; and employed all the arguments which you have now advanced, to rob genius of its independence and virtue of its dignity. Like you, he failed : the result was more favourable than such sacrifices usually obtain ; and the Princess, his widow, is now the only friend and protectress of her who addresses you.”

A loud, sharp exclamation burst from the lips of Sir Frederick Mottram.

She permitted the burst of passion to subside, till its last sob broke down into convulsive sighs.— Some minutes of silent emotion succeeded.

“ Shall I go on ? ” she asked.

He replied by a faint pressure of her hand, as it passed over his brow to remove the branches of a shrub which impeded the free circulation of air.

“The rest,” she continued, “is soon told. While residing in the Princess’s family in London, I had frequent opportunities of seeing *you*, of witnessing your habits. I heard you in the House of Commons, saw you at the Opera, heard of you as the frequent theme of conversation and of comment in the Princess’s circles. I watched you on the very evening when you sat opposite to her and Lady Frances, and when the abruptness of your action and frequent direction of your glass to their box betrayed the torture of some uncontrollable deep emotion. I had an appointment on that night in the hospital ward of a workhouse with a poor dying sister artist, whose story was almost a repetition of my own; and it struck me, that you might, with a beneficial effect on your inflamed and distempered feelings, take a lesson from her deathbed-side worth all that precept ever produced. You were unhappy amidst every thing that life and society can afford to multiply enjoyment and ensure content. You were unhealthy in the prime of manhood, from a passive yielding to the circumstances and accidents of a false position, from an indolent addiction to the artificial habits of that society into which mis-directed ambition and the undue influence of others placed you. You wanted rousing, you required a blow; I struck it boldly, for I wanted—my revenge!”

She paused. Her auditor,—if indeed he was her auditor; if a discovery so stunning, if the dead restored to life, if the recapitulation of events and sufferings which gave to every word the sharpness of the dagger’s point, had not blunted even remorse itself,—her auditor remained silent. He lay stretched and motionless on the mossy bank where he had lately lounged in passionate emotion. His head was buried in his hands; and his breast heaved with a difficult and heavy respiration. Whatever were his efforts to recover his poise of mind, and fling off the oppression which weighed down his very physical being, their success was doubtful and slow. A vague and inextricable confusion, a tingling sensation through the whole frame, (such as, it is said, accompanies the return to life of the half-drowned,) the rush of memory with its pains, of remorse with its pangs—the past,—the present, with its delicious and empasioned

convictions—succeeded to each other, like the phantoms of a perturbed vision; and it was long ere the blood flowed freely through his veins, or the external world reassumed its empire over his senses.

When once more aroused to the consciousness of his position, when he again breathed without effort the delicious freshness of the breeze impregnated with the perfume of many a night-blowing flower; the tinkling murmur of the rills which fed the illuminated fountain, the forest, the many-twinkling firmament that canopied his head, were objects that soothed and renovated him.

He was alone. The sorceress who had worked so singular a revulsion of his whole being was gone. Strange to say, he felt relieved by this conviction. He arose, and plunged deeper and deeper into the intricacies of the wooded knolls, till their dark, sequestered wildness, and a rush of waters across a narrow glen, obliged him to return on his steps. He paused, in fear of encountering the gay groups of the Pavilion of the Groenendael; but the toll of some distant clock, borne on the silence of the night, released him from the apprehension.—It struck two!—It is not alone when ‘it treads on flowers,’ that the foot of Time falls noiseless and unperceived. Strong emotions, whatever be the cause which rouses the passions and agitates the mind, are too preoccupying to admit of the slow counting of the hours.

With slow and reluctant steps, Sir Frederick returned towards the *rendez-vous de chasse*. But there was now no reflection of bright lights, no sound of pleasant music, to mock his gloom, or to startle the timidity of his shaken frame. Silence and darkness the most absolute prevailed. He entered the Gothic portico: it was empty, as the ruined porch of some deserted monastery. He examined the folding doors of the saloon behind it: they were fastened within. He drew back for a short distance, and threw an examining glance over the whole pile of building. The conjunction of the grey towers of the ancient *maison de chasse* with its beautiful Gothic addition, was more apparent by the glimmering of the starry firmament, than when a glare of lights in the foreground had thrown the remoter parts of the dusky pile into the depths of shadow. Not even the twinkling light of a candle, beaming through a loop-hole, testified that the building was inhabited. The whole scene, as he gazed on it, in its contrast to what it had been a few hours before, appeared

like some magical illusion. The brilliancy, the loveliness, the music, the buzz of mirth, of wit, and of intellect, had subsided and disappeared with the enchantress whose spells might be thought to have evoked them.

Through the intervening branches of the forest, one spark of light shone distant, like a fairy star. Sir Frederick followed its flickering and uncertain ray. Another shot forth, and he at length perceived that he was in an avenue cut through the wood, which led from the Pavilion to the village, and which had been partially lighted for the convenience of the departing guests. Pursuing the avenue for some considerable distance, he reached the *guinguette* where he had left his carriage, and found his courier asleep on a bench under the vine-covered shed. He appeared to have smoked himself into forgetfulness, as well as the postilion, who, stretched almost under the horses' feet, gave audible indications of the facility of repose to the rude and weary. The yellow flash of dawn was already tinging the forest's tops; a few of the villagers were already issuing forth to their early harvest labours; and it was broad daylight when Sir Frederick's calèche drove under the *porte-cochère* of the Hôtel de Flandres, where his new *valet-de-chambre*, as he attended him to his bedroom, presented him a letter. He was too exhausted, too absorbed, to have opened or read it, had not the black seal attracted his attention. There was a magic in the device, that roused every faculty back to life. He dismissed his servant, and gave himself up to the perusal.

“ TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR F. MOTTRAM, BART.,
HÔTEL DE FLANDRES.

“ Midnight.

“ FAREWELL!—The explanation which has taken place, will suggest to you the necessity of a firm and final farewell. Should this imply the sacrifice of a passing predilection, I claim and command that sacrifice—a slight compensation for the infliction of years of suffering and vicissitude. Any effort on your part to evade this conclusion, will compel me to throw myself on the protection of your wife, through the Princess of Schaffenhhausen. I can never

meet you again, unless presented to you by Lady Frances Mottram.

“ You will offer me (as to a poor relation) some certain means of existence for the future. The past renders it impossible that I should accept of such tardy liberality ; the present leaves it unnecessary for me to do so. I am as wealthy as yourself ; for my means are equal to, and even beyond, my wishes. They are within myself, a faculty which the world can neither give nor take away.

“ Pursue, then, your route. Bring your restored health, your renovated mind, to bear on subjects of vital importance to your country,—its foreign policy. Every step, from the capital of free, young Belgium, to the capitals of prostrate Germany, will offer facts for investigation, a text for comment. Pursue that route with one to whom time, common interests, and solemn vows have irrevocably bound you. Look to your wife, and live with her ;—literally—not nominally. You made great sacrifices to obtain her ; make one more to recover and reform her. Like you, she is the victim of foregone conclusions. Grant to her errors the indulgence you so much require for your own ; and forget, for the sake of what you owe to her—to yourself—the object of a fantastic passion, the passing dream of the two great epochs of human life,—always, as bearing on your destinies, a phantom, and now—nothing.

“MARGUERITE.”

This letter, frequently perused, was answered before the agitation it produced permitted Sir Frederick to seek for the much-wanted oblivion of repose ; and the answer was despatched by the porter of the hotel, before any one of his own servants was in attendance.

“ A MADAME MARGUERITE, AUX SOINS DE MADAME LA PRINCESSE
DE SCHAFFENHAUSEN, HÔTEL DE GROENENDAEL.

“ You shall be obeyed, to the letter, by the greatest sacrifice your vengeance could impose, or your indifference dictate. Beyond this, I do not think you have a right to command. I shall make no effort to meet you again. Your apparitions have ever been fatal to my peace, and perilous to my honour. I owe to you my first false

step in life; to you I owe its last and deepest sufferings; and—but complaint is weakness, recrimination vain. Farewell—for ever!

“ F. M. ”

CHAPTER XXII.

GREAT LADIES.

THE multitude of strangers who had visited Brussels, attracted by the ceremony of the royal baptism, or infected with the epidemic of the Rhine, had now disappeared from the capital of the Low Countries; and a comparative silence and solitude reigned in *La Haute Ville*, strongly contrasted with its recent bustle. The King and Queen of the Belgians had retreated for necessary repose to their villa of Laeken, to await the period of their departure for the provinces of Namur and Liége. The Chambers were occupied with mere details of business, to which the vigilance of the opposition brought those ‘*discussions intempestives*,’ that always follow an attempt of the government to disburse the public money, even when letters and the arts make their demands on the exchequer. The ministers of finance and of the interior were kept on the alert; but amidst the endless though necessary details of a complicated budget, nothing of deeper interest was before the House, than such questions as the claim of the Abbé de Pradt for his pension, and the letter of the French ambassador to solicit its liquidation.* Neither natives

* The Abbé de Pradt, at the general restoration of 1815, had surrendered his archbishopric of Malines at the desire of King William (who probably did not like such a multi-scribbling politician for a subject), and in consideration of this had received a pension of 12,000 francs. During the revolution this pension had been suspended; and the French Government having applied for its payment, the affair was treated as an undue interference, by Monsieur Dumortier, and other deputies; and reflections were cast on the ministers, as not sufficiently alive to the national honour and independance.

nor foreigners, therefore, found amusement to detain them in the upper city : the former retreated to their country seats ; the latter to the assigned fashionable points of legitimate and established travelling : and the mansions of the Rue Ducale were closed, and the portals of the Bellevue and the Flandres were silent and deserted.

The good old quarters of *La Basse Ville* meantime exhibited much the same aspect as they have done through a sweep of centuries. La Grande Place, with its beautiful monuments of the middle ages, and that noblest of all, the HÔTEL-DE-VILLE, the capitol of Belgium freedom, presented, as for the last five hundred years it has done, the rural commerce of Brabant and Flanders, in bustling activity. Waggon's of luscious fruits, panniers of bright-coloured vegetables, pots and baskets of shrubs and flowers, were arranged in front of the Broodhuys,* occupying a spot once wet with the blood of martyred patriots. Groups, as fantastically dressed as any which Teniers painted, or Callot engraved, circulated in noisy confusion ; giving a life and a colouring to the beautiful and ancient mart, which contrasted strangely with the quietude of the Place Royale and the deserted Park (so widely different, though so closely approximating). Still lower down in the town, near the Porte de Laeken, the neighbourhood of the canal presented its usual commercial groups, the Wapping of Brussels ; and everywhere the manufactories of thread, of woollen cloths, of calicoes and muslins, and of the thousand other articles of use or luxury which support the multitudinous population of the city, were teeming with life and movement, as in the fashionable season : such branches of industry know no vacation, and continue their wonted hum of activity in the absence, as in the presence, of their fancied protectors.

In a busy street of *La Basse Ville* stands the Groenendael, one

* The Broodhuys, a beautiful specimen of the fantastic Flemish architecture, is one of those corporation buildings, which have their political antitypes in the halls of the London Companies. It was rebuilt in 1518, and restored and embellished a century later by the Infanta Isabella, who placed in front of it a statue of the virgin, with the inscription "*A peste, fame, et bello, libera nos, Maria Pacis.*" The Counts d'Egmont and de Horn received the last consolations of religion in this edifice, on their way to the scaffold.

of the most ancient hotels of Brussels, since the destruction of the famous Corbeau. To this hotel, the flight of the birds of passage made no difference. Its rafted and wainscoted chambers had their usual complement of guests : Belgian Barons of the old Austrian stamp, who had not made up their minds to cut William or to oppose Leopold ; Orange manufacturers, with whom the *régime* which sets their looms in motion is the *régime par excellence* ; or country gentlemen of all or any factions, whom business, and not pleasure, had brought to the capital.

On the morning which succeeded the fête given by Madame Marguerite, the journals of the day announced the arrival of the Princess of Schaffenhauseu at this hotel. Both these events were thus recorded, under the head of '*Nouvelles de la Journée* :'

" Last evening, Madame Marguerite, so favourably known as one '*née pour tous les arts*,' gave a fête-champêtre, on the occasion of her retiring from a profession she has exercised with so much respectability and talent, and, it is hoped, with substantial success. Most of our celebrated artists, *littérateurs*, and scientific professors were invited, together with *MM. les Ministres*, and many of the authorities : some French and English celebrities also joined the brilliant party, which was singularly favoured by the fineness of the evening."

" Last night, or rather this morning, her Highness the Princess of Schaffenhauseu arrived at the Hôtel de Groenendael, where her suite and carriages have for some time awaited her. The wealthy and widowed Princess has been visiting her estates in Brabant, and her chapter of *Dames Nobles* at Namur. It is said, that she is completing the '*Tour de Chasse*,' begun by the late Prince in the Forest of Groenendael, for the purpose of disposing of the whole beautiful property there, and of fixing her residence in Germany."

These paragraphs attracted the attention of the Princess on the day after her arrival, as she sat in the best *salon* of the Groenendael, looking over the various journals, which were piled on an old spider table before her. Her quick eye was glancing from column to column, from page to page, and from journal to journal ; and her acute smile was sometimes clouded by a lower of passing disapprobation, or brightened to its most vivid expression, as the political or social news happened to meet her approval, or to awake her displeasure :

hers was a countenance in which men might read 'strange things,' the reflection of a mind through which strange things had passed.

Within the embrasure of the old-fashioned window, sat at work a *Béguine*, in her black habit and snow-white coif; while a *chasseur* (that showy and brilliant appendage to foreign rank) was busied in arranging vases of flowers on the old carved *encoignures* of the antique apartment. In the corridor, without the apartment, more than one lackey, in splendid livery, awaited (for in the old Brabant hotel there were no antichambers for lounging valets and intriguing abigails) to name or to reconduct the visitors whom the news of the Princess's arrival might bring to offer *leurs hommages* to the wealthy widow of the deceased Belgian Prince.

Since the marriage of Prince Schaffenhauseu, which had taken place in Germany nearly three years before, strange events had passed in Brussels. Its society had changed with its reigning dynasty; and of the very few persons left who had known his Highness (his ancient contemporaries and boon companions during the short reign of the Emperor Leopold), but few remained. Of these, more than one was shut up in the 'measureless discontent' of his antiquated palace or dreary *manoir*; and the rest had fallen into an utter obscurity or indigence, for which time, high play, and their own intrinsic insignificance, when not supported by artificial accessories, were more accountable than the Belgian revolution.

Among these, was the old Baron Van Gobbelscoy, who had been *frondeur en permanence* of Brussels since the affair of Vandernoot. He had grumbled through the reigns of Leopold and Francis, the French occupation, the Orange regime, and (to sum up in one the bitterness and spleen of all) the Four Days of eighteen hundred and thirty. The Baron's millennium was of the past, not of the future. In his boyhood, he had seen Voltaire and La Belle Emilie; and now actually occupied a *premier* in the hotel of the Marquise de Chatelet. He had corresponded with the Prince de Ligne; had been the friend of the minister Staremborg, and the intimate of the Prince of Schaffenhauseu's father. He preserved, as a sacred relic, the chamberlain's key, presented to him by Prince Charles of Lorraine, governor of the Low Countries for the Empress Maria Theresa; and he piqued himself on an album enriched with the autographs of Kaunitz, and his imperial mistress, and filled with endless anecdotes of the Court

of Brussels in 1772, his great epoch, when he had gone with a trifling mission to Vienna. He wore on his breast many extinct orders, in their day (like the *Saint-Esprit*) ‘*des colliers à toutes bêtes* ;’ and he preserved in his head, the prejudices, errors, and aristocratic illusions of nearly eighty years.

The Baron Van Gobbelscoy presented himself to the Princess with the air of an old courtier, and with the cordiality of the friend of her late husband’s father and family. He brought with him his court album, (he never went without it,) which he introduced immediately after himself; and the Princess was soon deep in its pages, over which she gloated with an obvious delight, that flattered its doating owner to his bent, and extorted from him the exclamation of, “ *Ah! Madame la Princesse, on voit bien que vous êtes de la vieille souche.*” She was listening with unaffected attention to his emphatic persual of a letter from Marie Thérèse to the chancellor of the Low Countries, forbidding the appearance of the Princesse de Stolberg at court, on her daughter, the celebrated Countess d’Albany’s, marriage with the Pretender, in the eternal 1772,—when another guest was announced, equally a stranger to the Princess, and equally brought within her vortex by the newspaper account of her arrival.

The lackey had already announced to the *chasseur*, and the *chasseur* had repeated twice to the Princess, the high-sounding title of the Count Melchior Von Katzenellenbogen, (in plain English, Cat’s-elbow,) before she lifted up her eyes from the old chronicle of the Brussels court, and half rose to receive her unknown visitor. Colonel Count Katzenellenbogen—*ancien guidon* in the service of the quondam Electors of Saxony; lieutenant of cavalry in that of the King of Prussia; aide-de-camp to Field-Marshal Lefebvre, in the imperial army of France; colonel *en activité* of the body-guard of the Grand Duke of Darmstadt; and general in perspective to the Duke of Modena, through the interest he meant to awaken in the Emperor of Austria on the first available occasion,—had served all powers and all opinions; and was the modern *refacciamiento* of the *condottieri* of the fifteenth century. Semi-barbarous and semi-civilized, he united to the person of a Croat, the air and address of a Parisian *merveilleux*. Drilled in dress, as in principles, in the school of military despotism, he might have passed for the *beau*

idéal of a *chef de brigade* of Potsdam, or the Cossack dandy of Petersburg. The combinations which went to make up his character and being, were dominated by a well-developed organ of self-love, or of vanity, which had induced him, on the principle of St. Paul, to try all things

A German metaphysician, a French sceptic, a mystical evangelical in Berlin; a latitudinarian in Paris; and an anythingarian in London; a Werter in sentiment, a Richelieu in gallantry everywhere; the Count, as hero, author, wit, cavalier, and mediatized Prince of the *ci-devant* absolute sovereignty of the Cat's-elbow, was, in his own estimation, an object to fix the world's attention; whether he figured in the *salons* of Stutgard, Paris, or London; or withdrew from their distractions, to his own castle and domains, in—he was not very certain where. The Katzenellenbogen territory had been so often translated from one German sovereignty to another, that his loyalty might well be puzzled, when suddenly questioned, where to bestow his allegiance.

A truant disposition had brought him from his *Stamm Schloss* to Wisbaden, where he had drunk the waters, and played at the Kursaal. The epoch of the baptism at Brussels found him attending its festivities, he scarcely knew why (for Brussels was not within the sphere of all his ambitions, literary, military, or matrimonial); and an accidental rencontre with Lord Alfred Montessor (an acquaintance and ally of the *salon* at Paris) had detained him at the Bellevue after the conclusion of the festival; until the advent of the rich and noble widow opened to him new views, which came not within the prospect of belief, on his first arrival in the democratic capital of Belgium.

The Count entered the apartment of the Princess of Schaffenhhausen with all the ease of a European man of fashion, and all the confidence of a man whose self-possession was never deranged by his modesty. One white-gloved hand was occupied with a gemmed cane, the other with a splendidly bound volume in duodecimo. There was in his gait and gesture a mobility, which almost tempted the beholder to believe that 'his whiskers thought.' His well-turned *moustaches* bristled like the brindled cat's; and his *svelte* and serpentine figure had all the elasticity of youth; though 'the damning witnesses' of time, which crowded round the corners of his small

and feline eyes, bore testimony against his juvenile assumptions.

He opened his address of self-introduction in German, but fell immediately into French, an easy chair, and an elegant attitude. He briefly detailed his excuses for presenting himself to the Princess, in a strain of elegant, but not too obvious flattery, which dwelt more on her personal and intellectual distinctions, than on her rank and station. "His *petite gloriole d'auteur* had," he said, "induced him to lay his last literary work at her feet" (and he playfully suited the action to the word). "It was entitled '*Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire de l'illustre famille de Katzenellenbogen.*'"

A more perfect *pendant* to the not very young, but still very elegant and artistly made-up German dandy, than that presented by the still very handsome, but no longer very girlish German Princess, never figured in the *tête-à-tête* portraits of an old-fashioned magazine.

In manner, air, and a grace, not 'beyond the reach of art,' but formed with its obvious aid, the Princess of Schaffenhhausen might have recalled, to the person who had visited Rome in 1820, the style and manner of that splendid imperial *petite-maitresse*, who, to the visitants of the 'eternal city,' was as attractive a modern monument, as the Colosseum was an antique one. The Princess of Schaffenhhausen, who in London had assumed the brusque and *tranchant* tone of the English and German stateswomen with whom she lived, was now, *maniérée* to the extreme of coquetry. Her first look, word, nod,—the play of her small silken-slippered foot on a crimson velvet cushion, the frequent flinging back of a voluminous sleeve, to display a fine and splendidly clasped arm, and the daring experiment of drawing up her hair to the summit of her head with a golden bodkin,—convinced the Count that the rich widow was *son affaire*. Looking at her askance, with his sly, unquiet eyes, he suddenly let them fall, and mentally observed, *C'est bon!* The rich vineyards of Schaffenhhausen and the ruined towers of Katzenellenbogen were already definitively united in his speculation.

"When I read in the journals of your arrival, *belle Princesse*," said the Count, taking a flower from the vase beside him, and placing it in his bosom, "my first impulse was to throw myself at your feet; and my first reflection, to wonder what could have brought the High Transparency of Vienna to the court of the *Roi bourgeois*."

“ Not to the court; for I have not written myself there. Business brought me here, a few *chétifs* thousands of florins; *rien que celà.* ”

“ You have estates, then, in Brussels? ”

“ A—a—*pied-à-terre*, ” she replied, carelessly, and fluttering over the leaves of the book which she still held in her hand: “ a *pied-à-terre* in the forest of Soignes. ”

“ Your late illustrious father-in-law, ” said the Baron, “ and my colleague in my mission to Vienna in 1772, was reckoned the wealthiest of our Belgian *noblesse*, the D’Arembergs excepted. But your late husband, Madame la Princesse, is said to have lost immense sums at Vienna. ”

“ And won them also, ” replied the Princess.

“ High play, ” said the Count, “ is high excitement; the infirmity of great minds, of men like Charles Fox and Marshal Blucher. ”

“ But I hope not of Count Katzenellenbogen, ” said the Princess, smiling.

“ Give me a motive, ” said the Count, “ either for pursuing an object, or of abstaining from it, and I am capable of anything. ”

“ You must have found one here, ” said the Princess, pointing to the Count’s ‘Memoir,’ which she took up from the table. “ The memoir of a noble house, drawn up by its noble representative, opens a sufficient field for the two greatest excitements—fame and glory. ”

“ If the royal historian of the House of Brandenburg did not find it so, then well may not I. But Frederick of Prussia was a passionless man. ”

“ I have a fac-simile of his autograph somewhere in my album; it was given me by my witty friend the Prince de Ligne, ” said the Baron, trying to get in a word.

While he proceeded to search for the precious document, loitering over every page in fond delay, the more rapid interlocutors passed through a world of subjects on sentiment and sensibility. The splendid distinctions of superior genius and high birth, the inestimable value of many talents and many quarterings, letters laudatory from the learned of Europe, and letters of nobility recorded in the Herald’s Office of Vienna, were run over in a jargon, to which the ultraism and *bas-bleus*-ism of the coteries of Weimar, Paris, and London equally contributed. The Princess and the Count knew

all the royal authors of the day. They had both wept over the pathetic poetry of the royal bard of Bavaria; they had both wandered through the primeval shades of the Black Forest, and the romantic defiles of the Taunus, with no companions but Burger, Goethe, Wieland and Schiller, she with her parasol and reticule—he with his *regenscherm* and note-book, and both followed by their sumpter mules, after the fashion of the middle ages, of ‘*force pierrieres, et point de chemise propre.*’ The Count had read of nothing but the Princess’s brilliant success in London; the Princess was eminently conversant with the Count’s praises in the ‘*Morgenblatt.*’

“Oh! they are too partial,” said the Count: “they are dazzled by my rank, when they call me ‘the brightest gem in the Gothic crown of German literature;’ and they are fascinated by my humble talents when they place me at the head of the mediatized Princes, and call me the Frundsberg or German Bayard of the day. I am more proud of their calling me ‘one of those rare meteors which’——allow me to show you the passage.”

He took up his Memoir, and read from it an *éloge* of himself, which could not have been more extravagant if he had written it or paid for it himself.

“’Tis a great distinction,” said the Princess, “to be reviewed by such a man as Goethe; and it is immortality to be praised by him.”

“*Pas mal,*” said the Count, curling his ebony *favoris*, “if one wanted that sort of thing, or cared for it. To the *roturier* it is bread; but *we* do not want literary immortality! That sort of fame has been forced on me; though I have sought military glory e’en in the cannon’s mouth. Goethe, more than any one, knew the value of birth, rank, and fortune. The inmate of palaces and guest of kings, he disdained to join the literary *canaille* of Europe; and that was his great merit. Think what mischief that man might have done, had he taken the liberal side of the question, as it is stupidly called! As far, however, as my merits are concerned, I was his guest (for I made his house my own), and the pride of the host might, perhaps, have—a—a—coloured a little the strictures of the reviewer.”

“*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*” said the Princess, “*vous êtes par trop modeste.*”

“The fact is,” continued the Count, interrupting for the twentieth time the attempts of the poor old Baron to put in a word, “I have known most of the professional writers of Europe, English, French, and German; and I never saw one of them who did not *donner dans la seigneurie*, as the charming Marquise de Sévigné has it. Starting from Voltaire, and his hero the King of Prussia, and his Catos Diva of Russia——”

“*Ah, pour ce qui est de Voltaire,*” interrupted at length the Baron, raising his quivering voice to its highest possible pitch, and laying a hand, distinguished by its dirty fingers and diamond rings, upon the Count’s shoulder, “*on peut se rapporter à moi*. Every one knows that the immortal Emilie came to Brussels, like the Princess here, on business concerning her property; and that her friend being engaged to superintend the publication of”

“It is ridiculous,” continued the Count, rising so abruptly as almost to upset the remnant of Belgian nobility, and pacing the room to the advantage of his fine figure; “it is ridiculous, the manner in which your friends of the high English coteries court the scandal-mongers of the press, and bring forward the trading authors.”

“Yes,” said the Princess, “who are but spies on society, and who, being admitted into great families, ‘talk of beauties whom they never saw, and boast of favours which they ne’er received’—*cela passe outre*. They flatter even the booksellers, and have sugar-plums for the printer’s devils. What do you think of Lady Agnes M’Gregor stuffing the red hands of her *libraire* into a pair of white gloves, sticking a *chapeau habillé* under his arm, and then thrusting him into a *soirée* at Montessor House?”

“*Mais elle est si bête!*” said the Count.

“*Pas si bête,*” she replied. “It sold her the copyright of her *fadaise par excellence*, which had been refused by half the publishers of London.”

“Milord Albrecht Mon-tresor,” announced the German *chasseur*. Lord Alfred entered, the mirror of English fashion in dress and address; both being as simple and concise as Nugee and English taste could make them. He walked straight up to the Princess, who held out her hand *à l’Anglaise*.

“It is too bad,” he said “that I am always to be indebted to

chance for finding you out. I have only this moment read of your arrival in Brussels. Where have you been? and why . . . ? ”

He now for the first time perceived the Count, reddened, and said coldly, “ *Comment ! c’est vous, Comte ?* ”

“ *Oui, c’est moi, mon cher,* ” he replied, advancing, and throwing himself on the *tabouret* that the Princess had pushed from before her feet.

“ You are always *en avant*, ” said Lord Alfred, with a sneer.

“ So they say, ” returned the Count, conceitedly.

“ *Mais dites donc, Milord,* ” said the Princess languidly. “ Our confederation of the Rhine, what have you to tell me of it ? ”

“ It is at this moment assembled in congress at the Bellevue. ”

The Princess started up, the colour mounting to her brows ; and the abruptness of her movement deranging the bodkin which fastened up her hair, she gathered up the scattered tresses with affected carelessness, and asked, “ Who are the members ? ”

“ To begin, ” said Lord Alfred, “ with the three great powers : there are the Ladies Montessor, Mottram, and St. Leger ; then, there are their ministers plenipotentiary, Lords Aubrey and Allington, and the little *diplomate bijou*, Claude Campbell. ”

The Princess now stood before a curious old dusky mirror, arranging her head-dress. The representatives of British and of German dandyism each played with his flexile cane, and eyed each other’s rival beauties with looks malign askance. The Belgian Baron, overwhelmed by the modern steam-engine rapidity with which subjects were discussed, and stunned by phrases, names, and events fifty years in advance of his vocabulary, sat incorporated with his *bergère*, a movable of the same antique date as himself ; his eyes dazzled, his ears tingling, and his trembling hands employed in tying up his precious album, in a silken damask cover, embroidered by the Duchesse Dowager D’Ursel, in 1772.

“ And what, ” asked the Princess, after a pause, “ are the protocols of their High Mightinesses? what are their plans of operation ? ”

“ They await for your Highness, as *présidente de la diète*. They only arrived last night, or rather at one this morning ; and they are now seated at the council, that is, their breakfast-table. They have despatched me as ambassador extraordinary to announce their pre-

sence, and to express their ardent desire of the honour of seeing you. They would have come *to you*, as in duty bound; but that poor Lady Georgina is really dreadfully shattered, and far from well. Then, *la petite* St. Leger is the tea-making angel of the *déjeûné*; and poor dear Lady Frances in a sort of Ephesian-matron predicament, and not to be consoled for the loss of her faithless lord."

"What does that mean?" continued the Princess, still making her toilet at the old mirror.

"It means," said Lord Alfred, "that the great commoner, the most moral man in England, left Brussels by the Porte de Namur, as his wife entered it by the Porte de Laeken; and that he is accompanied by a handsome *artiste*, who figures away in the '*Indépendant*' of this morning, as the *Amphitryon* of a *fête-champêtre* given last night in the forest of Soignes. The report this morning is, that they went off together by moonlight, from the Groenendael, in Sir Frederick's calash, which was left the last at the place where the carriages put up. But he was at the Hôtel de Flandres at daylight, wrote some notes,—one to Montessor, to forward Lady Frances, well packed up and marked 'glass,' to Spa; and then left Brussels alone for Namur: but whom he may have picked up at your Highness's pavilion in the forest, on his road, this deponent sayeth not."

"There is but one objection to your innuendo," said the Princess, throwing herself into an arm-chair; "and that is, that your 'handsome *artiste*,' Madame Marguerite, is at this moment closely occupied about my business, and under my roof!"

"*C'est égal*," said the Count; "his story is a good story. I knew Mottram in London. He is one of those *collets montés* in morals, who are so numerous in England. His society is as *guindé* as his person. *D'ailleurs, joli garçon et véritable Amphitryon*: but, Lady Frances!" (and he kissed the tips of his fingers as he spoke) "*Mon Dieu, quelle femme! et si bien conservée!*"

Lord Alfred was now hanging over the back of the Princess's chair, and muttering something, in that practised voice of mystery, so distinct to the person to whom it is addressed—so inaudible to all else. The Count hummed a German air, and fiddled with the strap of his embroidered pantaloons.

"I shall order my carriage directly," said the Princess, aloud; "I will follow you to the Bellevue."

“ My carriage is in waiting,” said Lord Alfred.

“ And mine,” said the Count, advancing, “ is in the court.”

“ No, no,” said the Princess, laughing; “ I was once so situated as to have no carriage of my own, and then nobody offered me one; and, now, *je m’en venge*. Besides, I have promised myself the pleasure to set down Monsieur le Baron, who has taken the trouble to walk here.”

Monsieur le Baron rose, bowed to the ground, scraped the old Courtrai carpet with his cocked hat, and began a speech that was not finished when the two modern cavaliers were already seated in their respective carriages, on their way to the Bellevue. The Baron spoke on uninterruptedly, got through an account of Voltaire’s arrival in Brussels, and brought down his anecdotes to the year 1772; when the britzka was announced by the *chasseur*.

The old cavalier buttoned up his album in the breast of his coat, flourished his cocked hat with one hand, and giving the other to the Princess, conducted her to her carriage. He seated himself bolt upright, and remained bareheaded till he arrived at his dismantled hotel, immortalized by having been the residence of Voltaire and *La Belle Emilie*.

The Princess, then, drove to the Bellevue. More than once during the course, she raised the black crape that shaded her face from the ardours of the mid-day sun, to catch a breath of air: but suddenly let it fall, as some of the recognized authorities of the revolutionary day passed her; probably, in disgust at the democratic changes, which left a woman of her rank with no other society than English detrimentals, German fortune-hunters, and bygone Belgian *vieilleries*.

Whatever were the causes that veiled her countenance and knitted her brows, they were all probably removed as she descended from her carriage in the *porte cochère* of the Bellevue, where Lord Alfred and the Count were stationed to receive her. She took the offered arm of the former; while the latter followed, observing that “ he would make his bow at the levee of the ladies before he went out to ride.”

They were preceded by Hypolite, Lady Montessor’s page, to the most splendid apartment of the most European of all hotels. The Marchioness had not yet left her room. Mrs. St. Leger was buried

in the depths of an arm-chair, and in the pages of the last number of the Court Magazine, gloating over the portrait of her own *chiffonné* face, and a memoir of her own frivolous life : the one from ‘ a splendid miniature by Mrs. Mee ;’ the other conjointly from the Red-book and from her milliner’s puff of her birthday dress, the united jargon of Lodge and Madame Carson.

Lady Frances, more languid than ever, half lying, half seated on a *chaise longue*, was rapidly filling whole reams of rosy paper ; while Claude Campbell, fresh, fair, and fragile, ‘ as the flower in his bosom,’ was immersed in the pages of Mingaud’s work on ‘ Billiards.’ Lord Aubrey had not yet left his dressing-room ; and Lords Allington, Montessor, and Mr. St. Leger had gone to look at some horses belonging to the Prince of Orange, which were expected to be offered for sale.

The party had just resolved not to leave their names at the palace, and to reserve their visits to Sir Robert Adair, the Prince Auguste d’Aremberg, etc. etc. till their return to Brussels, in their way back to England. The Princess’s entrance made a sensation. Cheeks were touched by cheeks, hands were kissed, and faint exclamations and languid inquiries, with the other *minauderies* of feigned affection, occupied the interval, till Lady Montessor entered, supported by her woman, and followed by two footmen with a *couchette*. It was some time before the Count could find an opportunity of making his bow ; and though he was known to all the party, it was received with a coldness that marked no very ardent desire to renew the acquaintance. The Count twisted his *favoris*, twirled his *moustaches*, and bit his nether lip ; then, taking up the Court Magazine, fixed his eyes on the portrait of ‘ the Hon. Frances Eleanor de Vere, Wentworth, St. Leger,’ and muttered in an audible apostrophe, “ How lovely ! and how like ! ”

The observation brought Mrs. St. Leger to his side, and the gallant and plausible Count soon found that he had *bien placé son mot* ; for the fair little diplomatist was at home in a flirtation with all nations, from the Don to the Tiber ; and the Count, always, in his own opinion, irresistible, did not let his powers of fascination lie idle. Meantime, Claude Campbell, who hated the Princess because he feared her, flung aside his book, and left the room ; and Lord Alfred, taking up the discarded volume, soon appeared lost

in its perusal ; though a strong expression of annoyance deepened the traits of habitual ill-humour which at all times marked his countenance.

The three great ladies were now 'in colloquy sublime and high divan.' Lady Montessor, stretched on her couch, was supported by pillows soft and glowing as summer clouds, her feet covered with a cashmere shawl. The Princess was seated beside her in an easy chair, and Lady Frances, at her feet, on a *tabouret*. Their discussion was warm, though carried on in a low tone. Lady Frances's manner was vehement, and her countenance more than usually marked by expression.

"You will never tell me, Princess," she said ; "Sir Frederick's leaving Brussels the day of my arrival is decisive ; and his conduct for the last six months will justify my appealing to the protection of my friends, and demanding a separation."

"Nonsense, child," said Lady Montessor.

"His insupportable temper," continued Lady Frances ; "his negligence ; his selling my own villa—I call it mine, since he gave it me at the birth of Emilius ; his hating every one I love ; his refusing to associate with my own particular set last season ; his refusing to meet you, Princess, at his own table ; his killing my poor Coco ; and, above all, his ordering me not to join him What do you say to *that*, Georgy ?"

"Why, dearest, I say that the whole thing is in bad taste, and very like the quarrels of two lovesick children. Why should a man and wife quarrel about anything, as long as they have the means to follow their own separate way ?"

"Exactly," said the Princess. "Live and let live."

"I now speak in a mere worldly sense," continued the Marchioness ; "in a religious point of view, as poor dear Medlicot says, I think the last folly married people can commit, is to part, even when there is a little cause for jealousy : but I don't place under that head an habitual predilection for the society of some particular individual, which time has rendered respectable."

"A thing perfectly well understood in Germany and Italy," said the Princess.

"And in London, too," interrupted Lady Montessor. "I could instance fifty such things at this moment among our own friends,

where the husband, the wife, and the friend form—a—that is, a”

“—A *triangolo equilatero*,” said the princess, quietly.

“But,” said Lady Frances, vehemently, “that would be impossible with us! Day and night, fire and water, are not more opposed than Sir Frederick and”

“Your paroquet!” added the Princess, coolly. (Lady Montessor laughed.) “And therefore your husband got rid of it; and he may again rid himself, by a process equally violent and short, of any *other* object that may be obnoxious to his feelings.”

“If I thought that,” said Lady Frances, passionately, the blood rushing over her fair face, “I should at once know how to *prendre mon parti*. I am capable of making any sacrifice, sooner than be tyrannized by a man so every way my inferior.”

“How very much in love with him you must be!” said the Princess.

“I in love with *him*! — never! and he knows it. I was sacrificed to his wealth and his boroughs. There was nothing in common between us. I thought him vulgar when I married; at least, he was not like the men I was accustomed to; and I never could get over the idea, that if his father had not succeeded in his contracts with government, instead of my marrying his son, my housekeeper would have been buying his gridirons.”

She burst into a fit of laughter, in which she was joined by Lady Montessor, who, in the intervals between lozenge and lozenge, languidly added, “Yes — there is—something in that. Lord Aubrey says that different men are made in different moulds: something about porcelain and the pottery; I forget now.”

“Just that,” said Lady Frances, smiling; “Lord Aubrey is so clever when he *does* speak. A little hard, though, to get on with at first: did not you find it so, Georgy?”

“He is not demonstrative,” said the languid Marchioness; “but that suits me; I sould die of a *beau parleur*.”

“And then his eyes are never silent,” added Lady Frances, musingly.

Lady Montessor raised hers to her friend, with so strange an expression, that Lady Frances coloured through her rouge; and averting her head, she added,

“Don’t you think so, Princess?”

“ Lord Aubrey’s head is so handsome altogether,” replied the Princess, “ that one would be tempted to think there was something in it,—if one did not know to the contrary ! ”

“ You are very severe ! ” observed Lady Montessor, carelessly.

“ Very ! ” reiterated Lady Frances. “ But nothing under the head of a Metternich satisfies the Princess. ”

“ I think I could make something of Sir Frederick Mottram’s,” said the Princess, dryly.

“ It is more than I could ever do,” said Lady Frances.

“ So I should suppose,” said Madame Schaffenhause; “ but that being beyond your reach, suppose you try to gain his heart ; ’tis the odd trick a woman is sure to win, if she knows how to play her cards. ”

“ When *I* play for hearts,” said Lady Frances, “ I promise you it shall be for higher stakes than——in short, nothing risk, nothing have. ”

“ And when you have risked all,” said the Princess, “ what do you expect to gain ? ”

“ What ? ” said Lady Frances, with a passionate expression, and throwing up her eyes.

There was a momentary pause in the conversation ; and the Princess sat, with her keen glance fixed on the face of Lady Frances Mottram, as if she was reading every lineament, and extorting a conclusion from every line.

“ At all events,” resumed Lady Frances, “ I happen just now to have the cards in my own hands. Sir Frederick the moral, or, at least, the reformed ; for since he sighed in vain at the feet of our Marchesa—you know we were once rivals, Princess ”—(Lady Montessor smiled faintly)—“ he has had no *belle passion*, and has been doing the proper——Well, *mes amours*, I know it for a fact, that Sir Frederick has a *chère amie* travelling with him, with whom he went off on the very night of my arrival ; and if I *should* follow him to Spa (which he knows I won’t), I should be very much *de trop*. ”

“ Pshaw ! nonsense ! ” said Lady Montessor ; “ that is Claude Campbell’s and Alfred’s fun about the *artiste* Madame Marguerite ; Lord Montessor says ’tis all nonsense. ”

The Princess smiled significantly, and shook her head.

“ There ! ” said Lady Frances, “ you see ! The Princess believes it ; she knows something. ”

“ If you won’t betray me,—if you won’t show me up. ”

A thousand ‘ *honour brights* ’ were pledged and pawned.

“ Well, then, there *is* an *artiste*, a Madame Marguerite, in the question. She is at this moment an object of as much annoyance to Sir Frederick, almost as—as his wife. ”

“ There, Georgy !—there now !—Go on, Princess. ”

“ She is a poor relation of his, who has claims on him. She has been supported by me, for years, belongs to a religious order ; and has naturally a desire to avail herself of her accidental rencontre with so wealthy and distinguished a relation. ”

“ Just the thing to bore him ! ” said Lady Frances, much pleased.

“ He is always afraid of his vulgar relations coming in my way. His cousin Molly and Dolly, from Button-town common near Birmingham, as Claude says—he ! he ! he ! ”

“ Oh ! but he has cousins from Ireland much more annoying, ” said the Princess ; “ and this Madame Marguerite is one. ”

“ Yes, ” said Lady Frances ; “ his mother was an Irishwoman—an actress—a sort of Mrs. Jordan. She only died, you know, five years ago : quite beautiful ! but a vulgar fine lady, and such a brogue ! besides being a papist, my dears, *à la dérobée*. ”

“ Well, *ma belle*, this poor cousin is the daughter of Lady Mottram’s brother, who narrowly escaped being hanged in your Irish rebellion, *le pauvre homme* !—at least, so she says. ”

“ Charming ! only think of one of Emilius’s grand-uncles being hanged, and another being the hereditary grand——But go on, dear. ”

“ Observe, ” said the Princess, “ I only repeat what my *protégée* tells me. Your mother-in-law, Lady Mottram, had another relation, a half-brother, who kept an inn in Ireland. ”

“ My uncle the innkeeper ! ” said Lady Frances, half amused, and more than half mortified : “ that is the *comble*. ”

“ On whose head have fallen the honours of an ancient baronetage, by the death of a very distant relation. He is at this moment here in Brussels, with such an *entourage* ! ”

“ And does Mottram know this ? ” asked Lady Frances, folding her arms on the Princess’s knees ; her mirth subsiding into an obvious mortification.

“No ; the whole *embroglio* lies in the keeping of Madame Marguerite, who waits her own moment to unveil the plot, or not, as Sir Frederick may conduct himself. Meantime, she has applied by letter to the Baronet, the quondam *aubergiste*, for assistance. whose lady has peremptorily refused her, and affects to consider her an impostor. I saw an insolent letter from her to the poor creature, this day.”

“And what are these creatures called,” asked Lady Frances turning pale, “that I may keep out of their way?”

“*Ah ! ça, voyons,*” said the Princess, with a humorous attempt at an Irish pronunciation ; “*cela s’appelle Saire Dogerty, et Miladi Dogerty, sa digne épouse !*”

The Marchioness tittered.

“It is no joke,” said Lady Frances ; “it may be very annoying, coming to the ears of such men as surround us.”

“*Oui,*” said the Princess ; “*une ridicule ineffaçable.*”

“For Heaven’s sake,” said Lady Frances, anxiously, “don’t let your *protégée* take any step till we are gone.”

“And when will that be?” said the Princess.

“Oh ! to-morrow, to-morrow !” said the Marchioness, with all the restless impatience of a sick and spoiled child : “this place appears to me covered with a black crape : all gone that I knew or cared for.”

“Exactly,” said Lady Frances. “St. Leger says that there is not one of our old set left, *pas ce que s’appelle un*. The men, too are bored to death, being kept so long waiting for us. Only look there at Alfred Montessor : he has mounted his sulky look ! I suppose he has been losing at billiards to that odious Count.”

“*Piano pianissimo,*” said the Princess, putting her fingers to her lip : and stepping forward, she whispered, “Cut him, if you will, in London ; but don’t offend him here. He will put you in ‘Morgen-blatt,’ *ou, pardie, pire que cela*. Besides, he may be of use to you. He may give you a fête at his ancient castle. It lies somewhere between Darmstadt and Baden. And then he has recently been appointed Jagd Junker, in the magnificent wilds of Odenwald, or Oden’s forest ; and can command a boar-hunt or buschgang, and take the unoccupied men off your hands.”

The ladies smiled and caressed the Princess. The resources she

had opened, the new words she employed, not only gave a new colour to their tour, but raised the Count *cent per cent* in their opinion; who, as well as Lord Alfred, though both affecting preoccupation, threw from time to time a furtive and observant glance on the confederated powers of the *couchette*.

The entrance of the cavaliers of the party, Lords Aubrey and Montessor, Lord Allington, Mr. St. Leger, and Claude Campbell, broke up the conference. They respectively offered their devoirs to their future hostess of the Rhine, according as their various views, or their common *prestige* in favour of her rank and influence, directed. Those among the men who had not yet seen the Count bowed coldly to his haughty recognition: but the ladies, beckoning them to their side, whispered the advantages to be derived from the Count's acquaintance in Germany; talking in great excitement of busch-gangs, jagd-junkers, and the forest of Oden.

The gentlemen, let down by their dreary journey from Calais to Lille and from Lille to Brussels, kindled at the awakened fires of the languid ladies of their thoughts: a general council was called; a round table was spread with maps, prints, tours up the Rhine and down the Rhine, and 'Autumns in the Taunus.' 'Summers in Western Germany,' 'trips,' 'journals,' 'voyages,' with all their thousand-times repeated raptures about Thurmbergs, Lurleybergs, Marksbergs, were consulted, from Gottschalk's Mountain Castles of Germany, down to the last bookseller's guide-book. Some wished to steam up the Rhine, and return through the magnificent scenes of the Taunus; others chose to go by land and return by water; some were for stopping here, and others there; some were desirous of seeing the ruined towers of 'the Cat' and 'the Mouse,' of going by the famous '*route Napoléon*;' others had designs on the Bergstrasse.

Lord Allington, who sat coolly looking on, with his cane at his lips, and his eyes half closed, declared, "that he travelled principally for change of diet; being heartily tired of white bait and poacher's black game. His stomach," he said, "wanted a new idea—hungered for *Kramts vogel*, and thirsted for *Kalt schale*. *Au reste*, the party, and not the journey, was his attraction: but he would propose, that whoever repeats the slang of the Rhine guide-books, should pay a forfeit for every offence."

“As, for instance?” said Lord Alfred.

“Why, phrases cut and dry, such as, ‘the castled craigs of the Drachenfels,’ or ‘the exulting and abounding river.’”

“Or telling the story of Nonnenswerth more than twice,” observed Lord Alfred.

“Or even alluding to the brothers, and their castles of Liebenstein and Steonfels,” added Lord Allington.

“Or quoting Lord Byron,” said Lord Alfred.

“Or Baron Von Gerning’s *pretty* poems on the Taunus,” said Lord Allington.

The Princess and the Count exchanged looks bordering on contempt.

“As far as I am concerned,” said the Marquis, “so that I am in time for ‘Robert le Diable’ at Frankfort, I am satisfied; since my dear opera at Darmstadt is no more, where, *you* may remember, Aubrey, we heard Wild and the pretty little Marconi in 1819.”

“Yes,” said Lord Aubrey, listlessly, “and where I was consigned to the Dowager Margravines and Altesses, to practise the Polonaise, while you were shut up with the Grand Duke, scraping your violin for some opera of his own composing! I have a perfect recollection of the whole bore.”

“I propose,” said the Princess, who, as well as the Count, had celebrated the beauties of German scenery in every variety of extravagant eulogy, “that you leave the entire affair to the Count and myself, who have traversed every wolf-tract of the forests and mountains, from Cologne to Hanover.”

“Oh! by all means,” exclaimed Lady Frances; “do, Princess, it will be so very nice.”

“By all means,” re-echoed the entire party, delighted to be spared the trouble of thinking for themselves.

“Well, then, I propose your starting from Cologne for Bonn, as fast as our lazy post-horses can carry you; and then, emerging from the mountains and following the brink of the Rhine to Bingen, you shall plunge into the purple hills of the Rhingau, and reaching Ingelheim. . . .”

“Of which the following tradition,” interrupted the Count, “is but little known. In one of the ‘castle craigs’ of Ingelheim, frown

the ruins of an ancient palace of Charlemagne. Here the Imperial Bertha and the Emperor's"

"Oh Count, spare us the loves of the eternal Bertha and Eginhard," cried Lord Allington.

"It was not on the *Index Expurgatorius*," said the Count, pettishly.

"Here is the whole legend," said Mrs. St. Leger, opening a guide-book, printed in the year 1777. "Lady Agnes M'Gregor is turning it into verse, for her *Legends of the Rhine*."

"Then," continued the Princess, "you will stop to sleep, if you please, at Mayence."

"Where you will pause and bend the knee," said the Count, "at the shrine of Gutenberg, the first printer; and kiss the walls of Faust's house."

"I think I see myself!" said Lord Albert.

"*Comment!*" said the Count, turning round fiercely.

"If I kiss anything," said Lord Allington, "at Mayence, it shall be the tomb of the old Abbot Frauenlob, or 'Praise-the-ladies;' his name is so funny."

"Go on," said the Marchoiness, impatiently. "Shan't we be off, Princess, the next morning?"

"Yes, the next morning," said the Princess, marking the stages with her golden pencil. "There is nothing to be seen at Mayence, but casernes and cabarets, barracks and beer-houses; with Prussian soldiers stuffed with wool and horse-hair, and Austrians with faces as white as their uniforms. So cross the Rhine at once to Cassel, and enter the dominions of the Duke of Nassau."

"Dominions!" repeated Lord Allington, with a sneer.

"Whose beautiful capital," continued the Count.

"A tidy English watering-place, with white houses and green shutters," said Lord Allington.

"His peace establishment," said the Count.

"Is, I dare say, a thousand strong," muttered Lord Allington.

"Hasn't Nassau something of a little constitution of her own?" asked Lord Aubrey. "I think somebody said so in the House, the other night."

"Oh, yes," said the Princess, sneering; "a little house of commons in the village of Beiberick, close to the Duke's country-house;

and prettily he has been paid for it. One of its members chose to oppose the budget. The Duke naturally turned him out, and all who voted with him. The *frondeur* refused to pay the tax, all the same; was thrown into prison, and died. The son, following in the father's steps, had his property in Wisbaden seized, when two pictures, amongst other things, were put up to sale; the first, the portrait of the *frondeur*, sold for four hundred francs; and the second, the Grand Duke's own, was knocked down for three kreutzers."

"Well, if they will give constitutions to nations who are not fit for them, they must take the consequence," said the Marquis.

"True, Milord," said the Count. "Germany is essentially aristocratic. The people are well fed and contented; and provided the press be kept quiet, and a few turbulent spirits curbed, all will go the better for it."

"That is just the reverse with us," said Lord Allington: "our people are better taught than fed; and that's the reason I have *mangé ma fortune*, before the radicals rise to eat it for me."

"Not," said the Count, "that our people are ignorant. The King of Prussia, for example, has taken the national education into his own hands; and, improving on Napoleon's catechism, has determined, not only what the nation shall believe, but what they shall know. By his benignant despotism, in educating the youth of his land to be useful and submissive subjects, and preventing them from educating themselves in the school of French jacobinism, he has done one of the greatest things that has been effected since the foundation of the Jesuits."

"I prefer the Emperor of Austria's plan," said the Princess: "plenty to eat, and no press; pleasures for the obedient in Vienna, and fortresses for the refractory in Hungary. Your king—for I believe, Count, you are a subject of Prussia—has put thoughts into his subject's heads, and arms into their hands. Not but that the Prussian system would do very well for England and France; and I am happy to see that the *juste-milieu* ministry in France are trying to import it, and that your English Tory writers, my Lord, and reviewers are preaching German metaphysics and German criticism, and German institutions, to their countrymen. One way or other, the press must be put down. You must dog the heels of miscreant publishers, and incarcerate revolutionary authors in dungeons as

deep as those of Spielberg, or as high as those of Marksberg, if you do not mean to merge hereditary honours in a universal democracy.”

“You are quite right, Princess,” said Lord Alfred.

“I saw two statesmen in Marksberg, the other day,” said the Count, while the vehement Princess paused for breath: “they are shut up, the one for forty, the other for two-and-twenty years, for some inflammatory publication.”

“You will see the romantic fortress,” resumed the Princess, penning the route with her pencil, “where these erring mortals behold from their grated windows the glories of the Rhine beneath. The late affair at Frankfort will people the towers, and fill *oubliettes* long untenanted.”

“It is all the fault of the Whigs,” said Lord Montessor, yawning.

“From the very first attempt to abolish the patriarchal *Leibeigenschaft*, I augured the worst,” said the Count.

“Why, Count,” said Lord Allington, “you and the Princess seem to anticipate the restoration of the secret tribunal! What do you call it in German?”

“The *frei gericht*,” exclaimed the two mediatized potentates together.

“My own castle,” said the Count, “was a *frei stuhl*, or seat of the tribunal. Margrave Rodolph II., from whom I descend in a direct line, was the last *stahl graf*, or supreme judge; and all the family were *frei schöppers* for many generations.”

“How very nice!” said Mrs. St. Leger. “I do so love the German language!”

“But the whole magnificent system,” continued the Count, “was upset by the short-sighted policy of Charles the Fifth.”

“Or rather,” said the Princess, “by the innovating spirit of that reforming age to which Charles was obliged to yield.”

“The very word ‘reform’ makes me sick,” said Lord Alfred.

“What really was that secret tribunal?” asked Mr. St. Leger; “one reads so much about it in German romances.”

Lady Frances Mottram and Claude Campbell were meantime engaged in a window apart, muttering over a bouquet of flowers and some toys he had brought in: Lord Aubrey was leaning over Lady Montessor’s couch, catching, as he might, the feeble murmurs of her lisping accents.

“The *frei gericht*,” said the Count and the Princess, speaking in a breath, but the Princess maintained the *parole*—“The *frei gericht* was a mysterious tribunal which spread throughout Germany, selected from princes, nobles, and citizens; for all, who could, were anxious to be the agents, rather than the victims, of its terrific but necessary denunciations. The *wissenden*, or initiated, knew each other by secret signs.”

“A sort of despotic carbonari, I suppose,” said Lord Allington, a sly look of mingled humour and surprised curiosity passing over his countenance.

“The accused knew neither his accuser nor his judge,” said the Count.

“That was pleasant,” said Lord Allington.

“The oath,” said the Princess, “was to spare none—(and what beautiful poetry!) none that the sun shineth on, or the rain wetteth, or that floats between heaven and earth. Is not that fine? How very sublime!”

“Very!” said Mrs. St. Leger: “what Lady Agnes would give for it, for her traditions of the Rhine, which will now have such an interest, when everybody is going there!”

“And such novelty!” said Lord Allington.

“Lady Agnes is a twaddle!” said Lord Alfred.

“I think her charming!” said Mrs. St. Leger. “But go on, Count, about your tribunal.”

“The proceedings were summary,” said the Count. “The culprit was summoned: if he refused to appear, he was surely found dead, with the executioner’s knife sticking in his breast.”

“And if he did appear?” said Lord Allington.

“Why, he was brought to one of our castles, let fall through a trap into the *oubliettes*, and there was an end to him,” said the Princess, carelessly. “But pray read Goethe’s divine ‘Goetz Von Berlichingen.’”

“Oh! I remember,” said Lord Allington; “his extravagant heroine was a victim of the secret tribunal.”

“Should such an institution be again required,” continued the Princess, “in these most innovating times, I believe, Count, that many of our castles are still *in statu quo*.”

“ One of mine,” said the Count, “ has its range of dungeons perfect, with dark vaulted chambers, stone doors, instruments of torture fixed in the walls, and *oubliettes*.”

“ How very nice !” again exclaimed Mrs. St. Leger : “ I wonder all the romance writers in the world don’t come to Germany, to visit these castles on the Rhine.”

“ It would make a famous ballet,” said Lord Montessor.

“ The secret tribunal ?” asked Lord Allington.

“ No, but Goethe’s *drame*. Think of Taglioni in *Adelaide of Weislingen* !”

“ Dancing to her own execution,” observed Lord Allington.

“ Well,” said Lord Alfred, peevishly, and jealous that the Count had engrossed so much of the general attention, “ enough of the secret tribunal : I am sick of Germany, and all belonging to it.”

“ Mine is not exactly on the Rhine,” said the Count. “ It lies in the midst of mountains, on the summit of a crag, peering through vast forests of the *pinus silvestris*, interspersed with oak and beech. The impetuous brawling of a torrent, while it adds to the magnificent horrors of the scene, guides the eye to a delicious valley, which terminates in purple vineyards on the shores of the noblest river in the world. There, the village of Rodolfs-baden-dorf discovers its slated roofs, amidst young plantations, plants of my hand, and children of my care, and the bubbling Brunnens of my newly-discovered spa, superior to those of Baden, Ems, Schlangenbad, and ‘pouring fresh health and renovated life through all my lovely glens,’ as the Baron Von Gerning sings.”

A general exclamation of delight and wonder, elicited by this description, was interrupted by the Princess’s proposition “ that they should all pause at the Count’s castle in their way ; and that Lady Montessor should try his spa. If it was successful, they need go no farther ; and on their return they might stay at Schaffenhause, which, lying amidst terraces of vineyards on the edge of the ravines of Rhudesheim, where the tradition of a virgin and a dragon . . .”

“ Here it is,” said Mrs. St. Leger, referring to her old book.

“ . . . Will be more sheltered for your reception than the ruder heights of the Count’s chateau.”

There was now a unanimous vote of approval and of thanks to the Count for his invitation. The Count was confused. “ He

looked forward with pleasure to seeing them on their return ; but he had just then an urgent engagement to meet some friends of the Faubourg St. Germain at Baden. Besides, Rodolfsdorf was just then overrun with architects, artists, landscape-gardeners, hydrographers, etc. He was creating, remodelling, working mines, building baths, etc. etc. Karl Schinkel, and Theodore Ottmer, were working for him at that moment."

" Oh dear !" sighed Lady Montessor, wearied by the buzz of voices, " let us get quietly and quickly on to Baden-Baden, and keep Schaffenhausen and Cats-what's-its-name and all the other bores, for our return."

There was a general titter, and the high contracting parties deputed Mr. St. Leger to draw up a plan on this basis, he was already installed in his office, and pen in hand, when the door opened, and the page announced " Lady Anastasia Macanulty." Every one looked surprised when they perceived their Scotch cousin, the worn-out rag of quality, who had forced the pass of half the doors in London, introduced by a name they were yet unacquainted with, though they had laughed over her marriage in the papers. No relationship, moreover, or connexion with the Montessors justified Lady Anastasia's being accompanied by the tail that followed her ; for close behind were marshalled Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty, and Dr. de Burgo.

The utter want of common sensibility, and a habit of pushing her way into all societies, rendered Lady Anastasia invulnerable to the freezing reception of the Marchioness, who scarcely turned her eyes on her, but renewed her conversation with the finest of all fine men. Unappalled, however, she stooped her long crane neck over the Marchioness's sofa, and said aloud, in her broadest Scotch accent,

" Eh, weel, here I have caught you all together ; I'm only passing through, and could not refrain from inquiring after your Laddyship's health, and my cousin Montessor's." Then putting her mouth to the Marchioness's ear, she added, " I will explain to you another time, my dear Lady Montessor, why I have been obliged to introduce Sir Ignatius and Lady Dogherty, who, *par parenthèse*, are intimate friends of Sir Frederick Mottram, with whom I believe they have travelled thus far, and are worthy and wealthy people."

“Oh,” said Lady Montessor, “there is Lady Frances.”

Lady Frances was looking out of the window at the promenaders in the Park, with Lord Aubrey, who had yielded his place to Lady Margaret. She was now gently touched on the elbow by Lady Anastasia, who, rising to take Lady Dogherty by the hand, said,

“Dear Lady Frances, allow me to present you to Lady Dogherty and Sir Ignatius : they can give the very last and best accounts of Sir Frederick. They were to have had the pleasure of being introduced by him to your Ledyship ; I only ripresent him.”

By this time the eyes of the most select coterie out of St. James’s parish, or Belgrave-square, were all turned on the newly-arrived group, with looks of such varied and humorous expression of insolence, ridicule, and curiosity, that the assembly of English exclusives had the air of a last scene of some farcical drama. Lord Aubrey, unable to stand the contact, had taken his hat and left the room. The St. Legers threw their heads over their shoulders *bouches béantes*, the one with his pen, the other with her book, suspended over the backs of their chairs. Lord Allington was chuckling with a sense of the ludicrous. The Count fixed his golden double-eyed glass ; and the Princess, stealing behind Lady Frances, whispered, “*Chère amie, c’est notre oncle.*”

Lady Frances changed colour, and drew back with a movement that amounted almost to a shudder, casting her eyes rapidly round to observe if anybody laughed at her. Lady Dogherty, pressing forward, and leaving Sir Ignatius, squatted on a divan, where Lord Allington had invited him, began a speech, of which Lady Frances’s tingling ears scarce heard a word.

“I hope I have the honor of seeing your Leedyship perfectly well, and quite recovered from your racent dilicacy. Sir Frederick was raally unaisy about your Leedyship. He only departed last night,—a greet counter-tom : but at the reet you travel, you will soon overteek him. I hope you left your freends all well, the Devonshires, the Duncannons, and the Chesterfields. I see by the peeper, Lord Chesterfield has left town. Charming book his ; quite a brevery of ton, Dr. de Burgo says : such rules for good breeding!”

There was a general titter, in which Lady Frances was the only one who did not join.

While Lady Dogherty was thus endeavouring to make her way,

by her knowledge of high life, and high life literature with one great lady, (who received with silent sullenness and a disheartening bow of her haughty head the outpourings of her vulgar civilities,) Dr. de Burgo had actually taken the chair beside the noble invalid, vacated by her *cavaliere servente*. He had previously opened a window, replaced the cashmere and *couvre-pied*, which had fallen to the ground, and in a low soothing voice, and a look of considerate interest, he said—

“ A professional man may be forgiven for obtruding such little services as contribute to the relief of suffering humanity, whatever may be its rank or distinction. This room is much too crowded and noisy for your Ladyship ; I am sure you benefit from the opening of that window. Warm extremities, and a free circulation of air, are a great secret ; and I presume to offer it to your Ladyship as a travelling opinion.”

“ Thank you,” said Lady Montessor, half distrustfully and half graciously.

She *was* benefited by the fresh air, and if there was something in the dress of the Doctor that startled, his eyes and words were pleasing, and his practice successful. He continued in the same subdued and gentle tone to ask a question, or to anticipate a reply. He had analogous cases at hand from the Red-book of rank, and anecdotes amusingly illustrative of his subject from less distinguished patients ; and Lady Montessor, weary of striving to keep the drowsy mind of Lord Aubrey awake, was pleased by being herself amused, without an effort.

In the mean time the Princess drew out Lady Dogherty, for the particular amusement, but to the infinite horror and consternation, of Lady Frances. Lady Anastasia joined the St. Legers, and Claude Campbell ; and commenced an account of her marriage, and a list of the seducing qualifications, personal, intellectual, and hereditary, of W. W. Macanulty, Esq. of Castle Macanulty, county of Tipperary ; to which they listened with a tittering attention, interrupted by insidious questions.

Lord Allington and the Count had got Sir Ignatius to themselves ; who gave them his reasons for leaving Ireland, his journey from Tower-Stairs to Brussels, his protection of Sir Frederick Mottram, his lending him his shirt and Lady D.’s pocket-handkerchief, with

every incident and circumstance of vulgarity and ridicule, that the Baronet's demonstrative feelings and Irish garrulity led him to detail.

Lord Allington was in the third heaven. This was the first event in his tiresome journey which had amused or interested him. The fancy, which he had mistaken for a predilection, in the circles of London fashion, and which had the diplomatic *petite maîtresse* for its object, had subsided in the first day's journey. Shut up in the same carriage, she had gone through all the *manège* of her coquetry; and her *journalier* looks had changed from something like prettiness into absolute ugliness. Besides, she was evidently more interested by the frolics and mischief tricks of the *petit page d'amour*, than by the bon-mots of the witty peer, whose self-love she did not spare, and whose cooling down mortified her into retaliation.

Superior in wit and intellect to all his party, Lord Allington had worn out every possible resource of amusement derivable from the insipid follies of his travelling companions, and was yawning himself to death, when the reappearance of the Princess of Schaffhausen on the scene had roused him from apathy into a disagreeable and morbid sensation of aversion. A Tory, if any thing, in politics, he listened to her exaggerated principles with displeasure, as tending to put him out of conceit with his own creed, without supplying any other. "That woman," he said to Lord Aubrey, when she was preaching her absolutism, "is enough to force one upon downright radicalism. I sometimes think she is paid by the Italian carbonari or German revolutionists to turn us into ridicule;" and he was now led back to the same conjecture, by impressions still more unfavourable. Sir Ignatius's appearance was therefore a grateful relief. Lord Allington remembered him, drunk on the *Montagne de la Cour*, and asleep on the balcon of the theatre: and he now deemed him a treasure of inappreciable value. He suspected that there was some intrigue between the Baronet and Sir Frederick, which it might possibly afford amusement to unravel, during the rest of the journey. The lowering looks and flushed cheeks of Lady Frances proved to him that she was annoyed; and the sly-looking Princess, he plainly saw, went for something in the *imbroglio*. Even the Count, too, the descendant of Rodolf the

Second, was evidently not wholly unknown to the devotee of 'Shan van vaugh : ' for his Highness's eyes followed with a shifting gaze the now suddenly averted looks of Sir Ignatius ; and he writhed under the basilisk glance, until, overcome by annoyance, his face grew purple, his hands fiddled with his green-lined grey hat ; and his flaunting silk handkerchief, (illustrated by the Milesian face of the 'great Liberator,') fell to the ground, without his having the courage to pick it up, or even to raise his glances to the brilliant circle which surrounded him.

"That, I presume, is a specimen of the Irish arts?" continued Lord Allington, looking at the prostrate head of the representative of Ireland.

"It is, my Lord," said Sir Ignatius, crushing his hat.

"The oriflame of Irish independence!"

"Intirely so, my Lord."

"To what, Sir Ignatius, do *you* ascribe the extraordinary influence of the representative of the Irish people over his countrymen?"

"Is it over the boys, my Lord?" said Sir Ignatius, endeavouring to collect his scattered thoughts.

"Is that the technical phrase for your hereditary bondsmen?"

"It is my Lord."

"I should like to know how he manages them," said Lord Allington.

"Why, first, my Lord, he butthurs them up ; and then he slithers them down : divel a thing else !" said Sir Ignatius, with a humorous gravity.

"Butters them up ! and slithers them down—a short process for governing public opinion. You are a repailer, of course, Sir Ignatius?"

"Oh, troth I am, every inch of me, my Lord."

"And on what principle, may I, in my ignorance, presume to inquire?"

"Upon every principle in life, my Lord."

"As, for instance, Sir Ignatius?" asked the Marquis.

"Why, my Lord," said Sir Ignatius (looking round for the means of escape, and by no means in a mood for political discussion), "first and foremost, it would bring back all the great Irish

quality to the country, thim that sould the pass at the Union, bad squeeze to them! and make them spind their money at home, and not in furrin parts."

"By which it is clear that *you* did not vote for that false measure, the Union!" said Lord Allington, with ludicrous emphasis.

"Oh! I'd be very sorry, my Lord."

"You were not in parliament then, perhaps?"

"I was nat," replied Sir Ignatius, with an irrepressible twist of his mouth.

"I wonder," said Lord Allington, "that you patriotic Irishmen did not come in a body, and present yourselves at the bar of the House."

"Oh! then it's often I did," said Sir Ignatius, conscientiously availing himself of the pun, his eye still fixed on the Count.

"And for what particular bill did you call?"

"I left that intirely to the head-waiter," said Sir Ignatius, completely *bothered* (in his own phrase) by the tittering of the fashionables, and the reprobating looks of Lady Dogherty, who was talking fashions *with* the Princess and *at* Lady Frances.

Lord Allington, in his turn, somewhat thrown out by the reply, gave one of his semi-inquiring, semi-humorous looks; at the same time chuckling with infinite relish—"Oh! you consider," he said, "the Commons House as a very common house indeed."

"Sorrow a commoner, your Lordships, in regard of the Union."

Sir Ignatius now made an effort to disengage himself, by starting up, with an exclamation of,

"It's schocking hot! I'll take my a-jew, my Lord, with your lave. This place don't agree with me at all—(I mane Brussels,) whatever the Doctor, there, may plaze to say."

"Allow me," said Lord Allington, rising ceremoniously, "to reconduct you, and to express the hope of *au revoir, à tantôt*."

"With all the veins, my Lord, I'll be happy to meet you toe to toe, or any way you plaze, over a bottle of Johnny's berg."

Lord Allington still kept bowing back Sir Ignatius; who, on retreating *à reculons*, by one unlucky false step stumbled over a footstool, and in his fall, catching at the cloth which covered the round table, drew down the splendid bagatelles spread over it,

books, portfolios, bronze inkstands, incense-burning-lamps, vases of flowers, and a whole toyshop of *bijouterie*, and ivory and cut-paper inutilities, which, combining with a pot of Indian jasmine, scattered all the elements of nature, earth, fire, water, 'in hideous ruin' round his devoted head. The *bouleversement* was general, the laughter universal.

"I am afraid you are half-drowned," said Lord Allington, picking up the vase, whose water had fallen directly on the white chitterling of Sir Ignatius's 'best new baby-linen-warehouse shirt.'

"Or burned," said Mrs. St. Leger, whose childish mischief, once awakened, knew no bounds, and who was slyly applying the half-extinguished lamp to the well-powdered, well-pomatumed head of the prostrate Baronet.

"Or buried alive," said Claude Campbell, permitting the earth of the flower-pot to fall over his head and breast, as he affected to take it out of his way.

Lady Dogherty, whose cheeks glowed 'deeper and deeper still' with stifled anger and mortification, exclaimed, amidst a profusion of 'Oh! mys' and 'graciouses,' and 'I am so shocked,'—"My dear Sir Ignatius, how can you be so awkward!"

Casting a reproachful look at the Doctor, she advanced to raise her husband from the ground. Sir Ignatius, however, anticipated the movement; and in his efforts to rise, flopped his hands in a flood of ink, which (inadvertently applied to his heated brow) produced, by the newest lithographic process of transfer, a humorous impression, that carried the laughter of the children of a larger growth crowding about him to an inextinguishable excess.

The discomfiture of Sir Ignatius was at its height, and he was turning abruptly away to reach the door, when the Princess arrested his steps by observing, "You forget your hat, Sir Ignatius;" and at the same time presented it with an air of compassed gravity and respect.

"It is the Princess of Schaffenhause, my dear, who does you the honour," said Lady Dogherty.

"I ax her Royal Highness's pardon," said Sir Ignatius, cheered by the distinction. "We were highly disappointed at not overtaking your Royal Highness on the road, which was all owing to the Doctor's mistake."

“ And may I put in my claims to recognition ? ” said the Count, bending his cane and bowing gracefully. “ I think I had the honour of being your guest, Sir Ignatius ; of being under your hospitable roof, and entered on your books.”

The Baronet was now at his wit's end ; he saw the explosion that was impending, and his Irish pride and Irish humour both impelled him to show fight.

“ If you are in my books,” replied Sir Ignatius, his Irish blood mounting to his brow, “ it was all in the way of trade : but that's no *raison* in life why you should put Killy Kelly, the barmaid, into yours, as Lady D. here tells me you did. And it was all Tallaght-hill talk afther all, divel a more, poor little'cratur ! and she as innocent as a lamb : but never would have got a place, for want of a charackter, if Lady Dogherty hadn't turned her into her own lady's-maid, and is at this blessed moment here in Brussels to tell the same ; and moreover, if she has the pleasure of seeing your Highness, will tell you more of her mind—ay, in troth ! ”

A burst of laughter followed this tirade, and Lady Dogherty took advantage of its cover, by a sudden jirk, to pull her husband out of the room. Sir Ignatius, too happy to make his escape, lent his gigantic bulk to the *douce violence* of his mortified lady ; and found himself, the next moment, with intense delight, on the fourth flight of stairs, No. 144.

The laughter which had favoured the escape of the mystified couple was not abated by their departure.

“ Lady Frances,” said Lord Montessor, wiping his eyes, “ do come here, and tell us who your friend in the green pelisse is. I assure you, she was taken for a fie-fie lady at the theatre, the other night. I never saw such a friendship as yours, since the toasted cheese business in the Antijacobin.”

“ I know nothing of her,” said Lady Frances angrily, and blushing. “ She is Lady Anastasia's friend, and I refer you to her.”

“ Dear ! ” said Lady Anastasia, “ she travelled with Sir Frederick Mottram.”

“ But the Count,” said Lord Alfred, sharply, “ seems the *ami de famille*. His acquaintance with the *bon, gros cavalier* seems of ancient date ; and the book and the barmaid, Come, Count, come into court.”

! “To be sure he is,” said the Count, laughing off a scowl of anger. “He was my host for a week, when I visited the Irish lakes, with the Fürstembourgs, and Lord and Lady Sackville.”

“Then the charmer really is an Irish Baronet?” asked Mrs. St. Leger.

“No, but an Irish innkeeper,” said the Count: “I occupied his best apartment.”

Dr. de Burgo, during this long scene of mystification of his friends, had kept his place at the farther end of the room, behind Lady Montessor’s couchette, apparently as much amused as one whom it did not concern; and vigilantly prompt to ‘meet the wish,’ and ‘explain the asking eye,’ as *eau de luce* was required or a sunbeam obtruded. But when his personal interests became involved, as being presented to the noble circle as a friend of the ridiculed Doghertys, he came forward, and drawing up his fine figure, and settling his black stock with an air that even Count Katzenellenbogen might have envied, he said—

“I remember hearing of your visit to Ireland, Count; for who did not? The event was European; and literature has since benefited by it. But mistakes may creep into the conceptions of the most observant. Are you quite sure that this Irish gentleman was your *aubergiste*?”

“Quite Sir,” said the Count, coldly.

“It is very extraordinary, for I really believe that, however grotesque and original he may be, Sir Ignatius Dogherty is still, beyond all doubt, the representative of one of the most ancient families in Ireland, and very wealthy.”

“Perhaps!” said the Count, measuring the speaker haughtily with his eyes; “but he is nevertheless (or at least was, when I visited the Irish lakes) the master of the Stag’s Horns on the Cork road to Killarney.”

“Then I have been strangely imposed on,” said the Doctor: “I met them at Brighton, was introduced to Lady Dogherty, professionally, by my friend the Dowager Lady Dixon; and finding her case one of the most singular that ever occupied medical attention, a case that puzzled Halford, Cooper, and Brodie, I determined to see it out, and to accompany the family to Baden-Baden, of whose springs I have the highest opinion.”

“ And what may be her complaint?” said Lord Allington. “ Plethora? — that worst and vulgarest of diseases, too much health?”

“ No, sir,” said the Doctor, “ she has but one lung.”

“ By Jove!” said Lord Allington, “ but that is a wapper; for she puffs and blows like a porpoise.”

The Doctor permitted the laugh excited by this observation to subside; and then entered on the case, with a display of technical eloquence, which had its due effect on the fashionable coterie; every member having some darling hoard of hypochondriasis, that was flattered by the medical generalities of the plausible lecturer. Even the Count came round, when he passed an eulogium on the Brunnens of Germany; and he invited him to visit his own spa at Rodolfsbad, which he expected would absorb the whole profits of the Duke of Nassau’s establishments, and make him the first bath-keeper among the potentates of the Rhine.

While the Doctor was thus engaging the attention of the company in general, Lady Anastasia was making her way with Lady Frances in particular; who severely, and in no measured terms, accused her of unwarranted intrusion, in bringing such people down upon so select a society. Lady Anastasia, half a fool and half a manœuvrer, was now going on the Doctor’s tack, and was throwing in a word about Sir Frederick’s intimacy, when she was cut short by Lady Frances turning on her heel. She remained, however, standing for a while where she had been *planted*, simpering, smiling, and tearing a flower to pieces; and then took leave of Lady Montresor, and sidled out of the room.

Accustomed to similar rebuffs, she was consoled (as she often had been) for the insolence of her great friends, by the use she had made of them in paying off her vulgar ones. She had a long arrear to settle with the Doghertys, for money lent, carriages shared, dinners given; and Mr. W. W. Macanulty was at that moment paying an account of long standing with a Brussels banker, with part of a remittance which Sir Ignatius had just received from Kerry, and with which they were to set off for Baden-Baden on the following day.

The party now thinned off. The Doctor took his leave, leaving the odour of his plausibility behind him. The rest of the gentlemen and Mr. St. Leger went to make their toilet for a dinner-party at

the neighbouring chateau of Count Hompesch. There still remained Lord Allington, the Count, and the three great ladies : Lord Allington reposing himself over a book, the Count thrumming a guitar ; and the Princess and Lady Frances in a solemn conference at the Marchioness's *couchette*. The Princess stood with her despotic air of dictation ; Lady Frances leaned with her face on her arms ; and Lady Montessor listened in languid silence, quite exhausted by her morning's fatigues.

“ I have nothing more to add, ” said the Princess. “ Don't mistake common sense for cant. I cannot join your party on any other terms. ”

The terms were, that Sir Frederick Mottram, for the sake of that decency which even the most profligate of the foreign aristocracy preserve, should be followed to Spa, and incorporated with the society. The promise was given ; being extorted by some cabalistical word which the Princess murmured in Lady Frances's ear. She then took her leave, arrangements having been vaguely made that she should meet the party at Frankfort, on its return from Baden, and accompany them to her castle on the Rhine, on a certain day.

The Count, as the Princess withdrew, gave her his arm. “ How I regret, ” he said, pressing her hand, “ not knowing Hompesch, since you dine with him to-day. I ought to know him, for he is of one of the greatest families in Germany. His father was one of our last feudatories of the Rhine who held his courts of justice within the walls of his castle. When may I hope for the honour of seeing you again ? ”

“ I was just going to ask the same question, ” said Lord Alfred, coming up to the other side of the carriage, in which the Princess was then seating herself.

“ Oh ! a—a, ” said the Princess, coquettishly : “ suppose in the Count's castle on the Rhine ? ”

“ Nonsense ! ” said Lord Alfred, with temper.

“ Well, then, ” she said, “ it may be in one of my *châteaux—en Espagne !* ” And the carriage drove off.

The two great ladies still remained in council some minutes after the departure of the Princess ; and perceiving Lord Allington, Lady Montessor faintly exclaimed, “ What ! are you still there, Allington ? Ain't you been very much amused this morning ? ”

“Very!” he said, still reading.

“We have settled everything for our journey,” said Lady Frances, turning back as she was leaving the room, “and start early to-morrow morning.”

“What is to be our first halt?” asked Lord Allington.

“Spa,” said Lady Frances, sighing.

“So I thought,” said his Lordship.

“Why, for Heaven’s sake?” asked Lady Frances, eagerly.

“Because I heard the Princess say so.”

“What *do* you think of her?”

“What I always thought of her,” said Lord Allington, reading from his book, “‘*Elle domine partout où elle se trouve, et fait toujours la sorte d’impression qu’elle veut faire.*’”

“Humph!” said Lady Frances, still lingering on the threshold of the door: “perhaps—but not always: however, we shall see.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

Letters on a Journey.

FROM SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM, TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.,
GLEN DRUID, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

“Hôtel d’Harschamp, Namur.

“DEAR HORACE,— This date will send you back to your Tristram Shandy, while I am pretty much in the situation of uncle Toby, when, one morning, lying on his back in bed, the thought came into his head, that if he could purchase such a thing as a large map of the town and citadel of Namur, with its environs. etc. etc.

“I am not exactly on the broad of my back, but on a couch, to which I have been only transferred this day from a bed of worse than sickness. I *have* purchased my map of Namur, which lies

before me, with some charming old chronicles and local histories, accompanied by sundry less intellectual comforts (fruits and other delicious things, furnished by the kindness of the governor of the province, and the gracious and graceful attentions of his accomplished lady). I am attended, too, by the *Sœur Béguine*, who nursed Corporal Trim ; only she is something the worse for the passage of a century or so. Having no one motive to proceed or to recede, I should be satisfied to eke out the fag-end of my ill-wearing life on my easy couch in the hotel of Harschamp, looking on my old plan of the town (printed in the very year of the battle of Ramilies), for the gate of St. Nicholas, where Captain Shandy received his wound ; and gloating over the pages of a journey to Spa, through Namur, by the beautiful Queen of Navarre, Marguerite de Valois, which it is worth coming to Namur to read. There is, I believe, a magic in *that name*—Oh ! those Marguerites !

“ This leads me to the principal points of your two long and delightful letters, which, strange to say, I brought here unopened from Brussels ; having found them on my table, the night, or rather morning, of my departure. And first, as to your anecdote : I have been maliciously watched by two or three idle Englishmen at Brussels, the *fourriers* of my wife’s travelling junta, who have forwarded their gossip to their scribbling friends in London,—patrons of the ‘ Age,’ and contributors to the ‘ Court Journal ;’ and the story, with many commentaries and conjectures, is the result of their mischievous activity.

“ The small basis of truth on which their superstructure rests, is the fact that, since my arrival in Brussels, I have, for many reasons, avoided all English society ; and, above all, that of the set which, by connexion and party, were most likely to waste my time, had I given into their distribution. Amused, interested, entangled—in short, bewitched with Brussels, its old quarters and its new men, its ancient school of art and its modern school of politics, I plunged into Belgian society, cutting all else ; and on this, ‘some d——d good-natured friends’ (to use Sir Peter Teazle’s energetic phrase) have built all sorts of ill-natured reports, which have been exaggerated in London, for the amusement of the Sunday-morning breakfast tables.* I have

* Similar absurd and malignant reports of the English party papers have

neither run away *from* my own wife, nor *with* any other man's ; but an incident has arisen, of which your newspaper authorities know nothing, but which has had powerful influence on my late, and will have on my future, life. It is an incident that will astonish and painfully interest you ; but one on which I cannot trust myself to dilate in a letter. I distrust letters : they were not invented ' for some wretch's aid ; ' but to betray the honest, and serve the purposes of rogues. During my short apprenticeship to foreign diplomacy, I have seen such things done with letters ! Louis the Fifteenth, with his mistresses gloating over the broken seals of half the correspondence of Europe, while the post-master general stood shaking out his sack, is no solitary fact. I have seen things done equally vile ; and if the actors had been private individuals, and not ministers, kings, or concubines, equally *pendables*.

“ Now, though this be not a case of diplomacy, I will not commit my feelings and infirmities to paper ; and give up the most intimate passages of my life to the chances of a dropped letter, or to the false keys of intriguing curiosity. Still, from you I will withhold nothing ; and more especially on this subject, to which you are yourself not wholly a stranger. Let us therefore meet at your earliest leisure ; and, if possible, here in Belgium, whence we can proceed wherever you please ; for I will not now return to England, for I know not how long a time ; and have written to Mr. Harris to this purpose.

And now for my illness, and detention in this old historical town. The night before I left Brussels, I was at a fête in a forest (such a fête ! and such a forest !) where I met the *notables* of the country, ministers, deputies, (all of the new coin, with the fire-stamp fresh and unworn on the bold-cut medals,) together with professors, artists, authors, journalists, and *savans* ; intellect, in short, in all its varieties and departments. This party was given by a Madame Marguerite, a portrait-painter. I am not sure, but I think I mentioned her to you in my letter from Bruges : though I did not then

appeared respecting the private life of the highest personages in Belgium, which would produce a smile in the well-informed, if the scandalous political purposes they are intended to forward did not provoke indignation. This petty warfare, whether it be of espionage or of invention, is a disgrace to the public who encourage, no less than of the tools who practise, it.

know who she was. This, by the bye, is the person with whom it is reported *je me suis éclipsé*, because I was met in her carriage by Alfred Montessor in the streets of Brussels : though I have never seen or heard of her since her *soirée*, and probably never shall. An event, however, did occur on that night of the most agitating nature, which drove me from the crowd, into the darkest, dampest depths of the surrounding forest, where I threw myself on a bank under a spreading oak dripping with the night dew. In a word,

‘ A summer’s night in greenwood spent ’

did not exactly furnish ‘ the morrow’s merriment ; ’ for I set off for Namur with a burning fever in my veins ; suffered myself to be detained on the road ; in short, committed all sorts of imprudences.

“ As you like an anecdote or an incident picked up on the highway of accident, here is one, to which I stand indebted for some further insight into national feeling here, and to an increase of fever into the bargain.

“ My servants had begged of me to let them stop to breakfast at Waterloo ; as I had left Brussels without much consideration for their wants. So I walked on, partly in my restlessness, and partly to shake off a swarm of brawling children and old women, who besieged me on the eternal field, with the usual solicitations of—‘ *Commencez par l’église, monsieur. Je suis le guide pour le champ de bataille, et pour la botte de Milord Oxbrich.* ’ In raising my eyes on the lion which still crowns the monticule, (‘ *ce monument gigantesque,* ’ says the Guide-book, ‘ *élevé au jeune héros qui scella de son sang l’indépendance de sa patrie,* ’) the thought crossed my mind, that the hero had, since then, marched at the head of an hostile array against the independence of Belgium. At the moment, a young Belgian officer, loitering along the road, joined me. He was in command of a troop of horse, which was reposing under the shade of trees, and formed a true *halte de brigade* of Wouvermans. Slightly touching his cap, he said,

“ ‘ That monument is in a perilous situation. Without perpetual repairs, the lion will soon lie prostrate ; for the mount on which it stands is but the earth of the neighbouring field, piled up without any solid foundation. But it has already survived many of its con-

sequences, and has served its temporary purpose. Where are now the combinations of which the murderous and hard-contested battle it commemorates was to have been the seal? where the settlement of Europe, that was to ensure the peace of centuries! Since then, what an overthrow of all diplomatic arrangements!

“ ‘Of not a few, certainly,’ I admitted.

“ ‘A few!’ replied the young *militaire*, with animation. ‘*Par exemple!* Belgium free; Holland driven back on its own resources; England reformed; Ireland emancipated; the legitimate Bourbons in exile; Spain and Portugal revolutionized! How little now remains of the great work of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, to bear testimony to the political wisdom *de ces braves rois*, who in their estimate of Europe only overlooked the nations which inhabit it, *n’est-ce pas, monsieur?*’

“ ‘There was something mortifying and unanswerable in the rapid sum-up of the final results of the battle of Waterloo. It only wanted that my young soldier should have known that he was walking with one of the party in England which had taken such a share in that congress, to make the ridicule of my position complete. To evade the topic, I asked him if there was anything worth seeing in a picturesque point of view, in that neighbourhood, and he replied,

“ ‘*Ah! Monsieur est artiste donc! Tant mieux.* Our Belgium furnishes so many fine subjects. A friend of mine, Monsieur Fourmois,* has been occupied upon one of them,—the ruins of the Abbey of Villers close by. You cannot do better than visit it. When you arrive at Quatre-Bras, look to the east. You will see a long line of forest falling like a curtain on the horizon. It is the only part of the forest of Soignes which the hatchet of speculation has altogether spared. You will plunge into its romantic recesses; and in the bosom of a delicious valley, watered by refreshing streams, you will see the abbey. It was founded by St. Bernard, the adversary of Abelard, and has many points of interest.’

“ ‘At that moment, my carriage overtook us. My companion saw his mistake; but did not the less press on my notice his abbey of Villers, with that national pride which is now so very obvious in all

* Monsieur Fourmois has since produced some splendid views of the environs of Spa.

ranks in Belgium. I proceeded on his recommendation; went some miles out of my road, and found the noble ruins of the beautiful structure, with the surrounding scenery, so much in harmony with my own gloomy feelings, that I loitered among them for some hours, arrived at Namur late in the evening, took to my bed, became delirious, and, instead of proceeding to meet my wife at Spa, remained for four days in utter unconsciousness. The Governor of the province, Baron de Stassart, who seems to have found me out by inspiration, provided me with every aid and attendance my state required. I have had excellent medical advice, and am now permitted to pursue my journey after another day's rest.

“ I have interrupted my letter for a drive in the environs of Namur, from which I have returned refreshed and almost amused. Let no one visit these ancient and picturesque sites of the Low Countries, till they have set aside all classical associations, and replaced them by the stirring events and more touching images of the middle ages. This old Namur, for instance, what a picture! and what a monument! nestled in its lovely glen at the confluence of two noble rivers; overhung by its rocky and awful heights, bristled with the fearful engines of violence and destruction! The country on every side so beautiful and so rich! the cheerful, joyous peasantry, so well conditioned, so well dressed, so beyond the miseries and privations of the same classes in other countries!

“ From the little that I have seen, and the much that I have heard of the Namurois from their excellent Governor and Governess, they completely answer the Abbé de Pradt's character of the Belgians in general: ‘ *Voulez-vous un peuple bon, franc, hospitalier, laborieux, économe, ami de l'ordre et de la régularité? vous le trouverez dans le Belge.*’ And yet these lovely valleys, these fruitful plains, peopled by a mild and industrious race, have for ages been the battle-field where the despots of Europe have met to vent their ferocious passions, and to spread desolation on the soil that lay in the way of their mad ambition. There is scarcely a nation of the great civilized commonwealth which has not a long account of wrong to settle with this devoted country, that cries for reparation; and if the diplomacy which is now at work shall establish for Belgium centuries of peace and of industry, (while it will ensure the largest sum of human happiness that it is perhaps capable of bestowing,

it will only discharge a small part of its long-accumulating debt. I am surprised that this has never before struck me. You will say that I am coming round to your opinions : but it is one thing to read of victories in gazettes ; another to come into personal contact with the humanity they afflict.

“ In looking upon this paradise of the Sambre and Meuse, and on the gigantic citadel frowning above it, I did not wonder that that splendid fellow, Don Juan of Austria, conceived such a passion for the scene, and made it his favourite residence.

“ But I dare say, while you have the history of the ‘ *race d’Agamemnon, qui ne finit jamais* ’ at your fingers’ ends, you know nothing of the memoirs of my Don Juan. The son of the Emperor Charles the Fifth by a beautiful Belgian,* he was the most favoured of all our Elizabeth’s suitors, and the bravest and handsomest cavalier of his day. He first came to Namur to watch the steps of the beautiful Marguerite de Valois, ‘ *la femme la plus coquette et la plus spirituelle de son siècle,* ’ says my old Chronicle. She was suspected of some French intrigue, (organized by her mother, Catherine de Medicis,) when she visited Spa ; and Don Juan, instead of treacherously waylaying, fell in love with her—and with Namur too ; which he made the seat of his government and vice-regal court from that moment. His life and death form a romantic tragedy : he died in the flower of his age, his beauty, his heroism, and his popularity ; poisoned, says Strada, by his half-brother, Philip the Second, who feared the ascendancy of his genius, and his superior personal merit. Such was the diplomacy of those times.

“ You will laugh at these historical legends getting possession of my imagination : but Marguerite and Juan have for me far deeper interests than the virgins and monsters of your legends of the Rhine, after which the English are running. The Marguerites of the sixteenth century (the first queen of Navarre, and this clever, beautiful, but fearful Marguerite of Valois,) would make a singular and amusing work. You will think that I am as mad about names as Mr. Shandy. Perhaps I am so, and on more points than *that* : but, above all,—I tell it you in confidence, Horace,—I am miserable !

“ F.M. ”

* Marguerite Van Geeste of Oudenarde.

Letter II.

FROM SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.

“ Namur.

“ Namur ! still at Namur ? Yes, still here. I sent you off a letter yesterday by our old friend Gen. C., with whom I ascended the heights of the citadel. The view from it is superb beyond description. As a military position, it is strong, though partially commanded ; and in the campaigns of 1790, 1, 2, 3, and 4, it was an important place. It makes me sick, melancholy, desponding, to witness the immense sums unavailingly expended on such places, for the destruction of man ; while every *sous* given for his benefit is calculated, measured, and grudged. I cannot enter into technical details ; but what men, what genius, what efforts have been brought to bear against this fortress of Namur ! Louis XIV., William III., Lowendahl, the revolutionary Generals Valence and Hatry, have all been engaged in its siege ; and on each occasion what has been the result of this employment ?— carnage, desolation, and the transfer of a heap of ruins ; without one permanent consequence, even to the short-sighted governments which so misdirected the resources placed at their disposition by the people. In short, dear Horace, we neither study modern history, nor visit the sites connected with the great events which bear upon our existences political and social, as much as we ought. What is the Campidoglio or the Tarpeian rock to us ! when compared to the plains and fortresses of modern Europe, which England has so often and so recently bathed with her best blood, to the exhaustion of her national resources, and sometimes to the detriment of her national principles. And yet, after all, the interest conferred upon this spot by the single pencil-touch of genius, its consecration by the ideal presence of Captain Shandy and corporal Trim, exceeds all that history with its blood-stained pages has bestowed upon it.

“ On our return from the fortress, we dined at the Government-house. The conversation abounded with information on the subject of this renovated, and, to me, interesting, country. Namur, not-

withstanding its commanding citadel, took its part in the late revolution; affording another instance of the influence of municipal institutions on the recent destinies of Belgium. After all that has been said on the merits of centralization as an element of force, of combination, and of economy in national government, it is at the same time an element as readily turned against the people as for them. The contrary system has prevailed in the Low Countries. The House of Austria, as much from necessity as principle, left the details of local administration in the hands of the ancient municipalities; and the subsequent French occupation did not break through the habits of self-government of the Belgians.

“ By the constitution of the kingdom of the Netherlands, councils, elected by the people of each district, and of a most popular character, formed a recognized part of the system of government; and when the revolt against the Dutch, or rather the House of Nassau, took place, there existed in every city a body enjoying public confidence, ready to receive the sceptre of power as it fell from the hands of the ejected authorities. Men, well known to all, were present on every spot, to lead the people, to moderate their passions, to control *brigandage*, and to maintain order; and thus the barring out of one city was converted in a few days into a national revolution. Such a man was our excellent host Baron de Stassart, governor of Namur, who having filled a variety of posts in the public service, was an ensign of probity and talent for his fellow-citizens to rally round. On the 1st of November 1830, Namur rose in arms against its Dutch garrison, and reduced it to a prompt capitulation. On the 2nd, Baron de Stassart took the command of the province by general consent; and, without any other authority than the voluntary and confiding submission of the people, he succeeded perfectly in his self-appointed mission of peace. The province continued the image of a united family, amidst the perils and agitations of the revolution; while it contributed its undivided energies to forwarding the new order of things which succeeded.

“ It was at the fête in the forest that I first met the Baron de Stassart. He has *blanchi sous le harnois* of civil administration; and was confidentially employed by Napoleon, both at home and in Italy. The Baron is a *littérateur*, as well as a statesman; and one of the few European men remaining, who, having been formed in

the great school of the French revolution, entertain views extending beyond a municipality or a nation. Madame de Stassart is an accomplished and charming person, and *tient son salon*, as a Parisian lady only can do.

“ I start for Spa to morrow, by Liège and Chaude Fontaine, a route strongly recommended to me by the Baron. Everything I see and hear now interests me for this country; and, as the subject is new, I bless my sin of ignorance, which obliges me to make a course of *middle-age reading*, calculated to open new stores of literary and romantic associations to middle-aged gentlemen, whose habits of mind have been formed by the classic ‘Goliaths of the Bodleian library,’ I shall make the Ardennes my head-quarters till my wife’s return from Baden. I won’t go there, ‘that’s flat:’ she would not wait for me at Spa; for I saw this day her name in the *Eclaireur* (the Namur journal), among the arrivals and departures from that once famous resort of idleness and dissipation, that haunt of potentates and pickpockets. Direct to me then at Spa, if you do not come yourself. As time and space are now ‘annihilated,’ I can receive your answer in a few days; and shall wait for it: *et sur cela, je prie Dieu, etc., etc.*

Letter III.

FROM SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.

“ Claude Fontaine.

“ The date of this will surprise you. I dare say you never heard of Claude Fontaine; nor I neither, till I gave myself up to the sway of chance, which has certainly varied my life of late, if it has not improved my humour. I am as wayward as a spoiled child; and, like all spoiled children, I am governed by impulse; and live and loiter on, without object as without result. All the volition I have left is expended in writing to you: I make you no apology, for I know your kindly, and, above, all, your steady, feelings. I have but one means of lightening the tax my selfishness thus imposes; and that, is, by keeping to subjects which have a charm for you. I have not made a step in this journey that your idea and that of another person have not followed me. All here responds to

your artist's taste, and to your philanthropic views : political independence, according to your ideas ; and a country beautiful beyond description.

“ The road from Namur to Liège along the Meuse, combines every feature that makes the beautiful and the sublime of river scenery : on its left bank, the mansions of wealthy *industriels*, the comfortable dwellings of rural gentry ! clustering villages, the towers of feudal chieftains, or the spires of suppressed convents ; on the right, a range of bold rugged rocks, shooting up from the very bed of the stream, coloured with the richest tints, and bristling with the vegetation of centuries. The valley of the Meuse constitutes one of the richest mining districts of the Low Countries, abounding in iron, lead, zinc, and coal ; and the working of these materials, if it sometimes detracts from the picturesque effect of the scene, not less frequently adds to it, by combinations which confer a moral beauty on its mere pictorial loveliness. Numerous trim and prosperous villages, inhabited by the thriving workmen, rich in the images of rural comfort, are not less gracious to the eye than to the heart of spectators like yourself.

“ There is not a bourg or a hamlet along the Meuse, that has not also its historical reminiscence. Even the little town of Ardennes is remarkable as the site of the first monastery of the Low Countries, founded by St. Beghé, the nucleus of the chapter of *Dames Nobles* at Namur ; and the fact induced me to stop, where no English traveller, I suspect, ever stopped before : but thereby hangs a tale. In the midst of the defile of the Meuse, stands the fortress of Huy, the key to its military pass. Rising boldly across the glen, as if to block the passage of invasion, it bristles over the antiquated town, which reposes at the base of the receding heights. The jagged forms of the old feudal castle mingle with the less picturesque outlines of a modern fortification, pierced with innumerable loopholes, and presenting a succession of frowning batteries.

“ Huy, from the circumstances of its position, has been the scene of military adventure in all ages. Here the powerful bishops of Liège aided their friends the Spaniards against the States-general ; here the Spaniards defended themselves and fought against Louis the Fourteenth ; and here (and not in Rome,) resided the general of those military monks, *Les Croisiers*, whose preaching and ex-

ample assisted to unite the Christians of all Europe in the expedition to the Holy Sepulchre. Here, also, Margaret of Valois, my Queen of Navarre, whose journey I am reading, encountered an adventure coloured with more than the romance of her romantic age. I would tell it, but that you would accuse me of Margaret-mania ; and, perhaps, not without reason.

“ On approaching Liége, the genius of manufacture takes a gradual precedence over the genius of war and of feudality ; and in the very environs of its seven celebrated abbeys, and under the stately roofs of its baronial chateaux, the fume of the forge rises, and the clang of the hammer resounds. The old episcopal city itself is—but I cannot enter into its details, because it is—*Birmingham* ! I must not, however, pass over the antique ecclesiastical palace of its warrior Prince-bishops, with its square courts and arched galleries of an almost Moorish architecture, which resembles the Doge’s palace at Venice. In this palace, Marguerite was received with her little French court, by the gallant Bishop of Liége, Gerard de Groesbeck : but its chambers and halls are now appropriated to other purposes than those of princely show, or clerical luxury and holy gallantry. I lingered, however, amidst its ancient magnificence, and its present coarseness and trumpery, (for it is a sort of grotesque Palais Royal,) with an interest which, I blush to say, I did not bring to the steam-engines of Mr. Cockerell. But, notwithstanding my wayward humour, it is impossible for an Englishman not to be struck with the bustling activity of this prosperous city ; or to withhold his sympathy for a brave and industrious population, thriving by their own efforts, under a free government of their own choice, and a king of their own election. Leopold is extremely popular here ; and they are making active preparations for his approaching reception. He is expected in the town, with his fair young queen, in a few days.

“ With all possible respect for the venerable city and its well-denominated *braves Liégeois*, I rushed from its hot, bustling, noisy streets, and plunged with delight into scenes of such quiet and refreshing beauty as reminded me at every step of Italy, and especially of Tuscany. The broad road that leads from Liége to the very verge of the Ardennes, winds along the garden shores of the silvery Vesdre, spotted with villas and pavilions, and fringed with orchards, flower-knots, and vineyards, which crown the summits

of the most craggy rocks. Although my courier had written to Spa to order apartments and dinner, I found it impossible to gallop through Chaude Fontaine; so I sent forward Herr Kircher to make what arrangements he might, and have already lingered away three days in the environs of this elysium. There is a balsamic mildness in the air, which communicates its serenity to the feelings. The atmosphere is as genial as its fountains. I have been quaffing at its health-giving springs, which bubble up, warm and abundant, in a little island rising from amidst the peculiarly icy water of the Vesdre. This may well be the native region of Grétry and of Laïresse, (the Rossini and the Raphael of Belgium;) for such elements go to form such men. I am sumptuously lodged in a comfortable *auberge*, between the village and the vast and majestic ruins of Chauvremont, which looks like the watch-tower of the Ardennes.

The historical legends connected with this edifice (the very highest romance of history) I picked up on a book-stall at Liège; and I am now going to ascend its heights, and read among the splendid ruins the '*joustes et faits*' of the Seigneur de Chevremont, and of Nogerle-Grand, Prince-bishop of Liège, which, with the episode of '*La Dame Gerbage et le Chevalier Gisilbert*,' strike with more novelty, at least on the imagination, than Herr Roland and his nun, and their eternal loves. I heard *that* 'legend of the Rhine' sung, on board the Ostend *treckschuyt*, by a Miss Tyler, of Milk-street, (not, however, quite as Schiller has sung it;) and it has ever since been staring me in the face, from half the Guide-books of the Rhine which strew the tables of every travelling party one encounters. In the temper I am now in, '*Il me faut du nouveau, n'en fût-il plus au monde!*' Whatever rouses my dreary spirits is a miracle wrought in my favour. I am off for Spa to-morrow, where I shall wait for your letters.

“ Yours,

“ F. M. ”

Letter IV.

FROM SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.

“ Spa.

“ *Now am I in the forest of Ardennes; 'the more fool I'*

(perhaps :) yet, alas ! I cannot add, with Touchstone, ‘*when I was at home, I was in a better place.*’ I really believe, that if I had my choice, from Indus to the Pole, this is just the spot I would select. Jaques, in his most wild and wayward mood, did not enjoy the Forest of Ardennes, or throw off more thoroughly ‘all the penalties of nature, save those of Adam, the season’s changes,’ (pretty frequent here, by the bye,) than I do. I have this antique little village all to myself : its hotels are empty, its streets almost deserted ; and if its *redoutes* are open, I have not passed their threshold, nor met even the ghost of an English traveller to scare ‘my eyes or grieve my heart.’

“ I live in the depths of the forest, follow the wolf-tracks, and revel in sites which the English tourist in search of the picturesque (for ‘the trade’) never dreams of visiting. These gentlemen, thank Heaven ! are now on their pilgrimage to the Rhine, with the Tylers, the Doghertys, the Montressors, and the Lady Frances Mottrams. I am lodged here, (like Peter the Great, when he visited Spa,) ‘*dans une hutte,*’ hanging as it were by a peg from a wooden declivity above the *promenade de sept heures*, with one of those ‘*fontaines vives,*’ as they are poetically called, gushing from a rocky basin, and tumbling among beds of flowers, of which Nature, or perhaps Christine of Sweden, first flung the seeds. My habits are as wild as my wanderings : I go by the sun ; drink of the medicinal springs prepared in the laboratory of old Mother Earth ; eat when I am hungry, and lie down to rest merely because I am weary. I shall stay, as was the fashion when Spa itself was the fashion some fifty years ago, till the wolves come in and turn me out ; except my wife joins me sooner. On my arrival I found a note from her at the post-office, which is worth copying, as eminently characteristic ; and thus it runs :—

“ ‘ I was much disappointed not to find you here, as your note, dated Brussels, led me to expect. Without asking your motives for this delay, I shall only express a hope that it is not occasioned by indisposition ; and that I may have the pleasure of seeing you at Baden, as soon as you find it your convenience to join our really agreeable party. We have lost, however, one of its most pleasant members, Montague, St. Leger ; who was sent for to London just

as we were starting. The old tory Duchess, his grandmother, has teased the whigs into making him envoy extraordinary to some of the Northern courts. Lord Aubrey has written to his whig friends to get Claude Campbell appointed secretary of legation. My maid thinks she saw a footman in your livery, in the streets of Namur, as we hurried through; but I suppose she was mistaken. The Princess of Schaffhausen is not with us. I mention this as a peace-offering. She is detained by law business in Brussels, and cannot receive us at her castle on the Rhine. Our society salutes you, with yours, etc. etc.

“ “ F. MOTTRAM.

“ “ P.-S. I am sorry to say that dear Georgina Montessor is rather losing than gaining health; though she is still sometimes as brilliant and delightful as ever. She has derived great benefit from the skill of a very clever travelling physician, Dr. De Burgo, who is besides rather an amusing person, and plays sweetly on the guitar.

“ “ F. M.’

“ This precious document needs no comment! I have written her two lines, merely to say I shall expect her by the 23rd of next month. If she fails, the penalty be on her head!

“ Your letter, directed to Brussels, has this moment arrived, forwarded (with money) by Monsieur Engler. Well, there is no chance then of our meeting in the Ardennes! How your sense of filial duty would tell in poetry! Pope turned his to fame; and the maternal tenderness of Madame de Sévigné (recorded in such prose as none but she ever wrote) has made her immortality! After all, the affections do go for something, out of the frozen circles of English bon-ton; where a man takes it as a personal insult to be asked for his mother: I am sure any one of Lady Frances’s exclusives would. It is quite curious to see how she and Alfred Montessor stand in check of each other!—Ouf!

“ I break off and resume, as I am hunted by uneasy sensations, or as the sun shines or the shower falls; and have just been driven home. Home! (alas! I have no home)—well, sent back to my hut by a torrent of such rain as I never witnessed but in Italy. The more I see of the environs of this place, the more it suits my present tastes and views. I should like to raise a monument in the forest to the

honest blacksmith who, some centuries ago, purchased a few '*bonniers de bois*' from the Prince Bishop of Liège, cleared away the brambles that choked the spring of the Pouhon, raised a few huts, and thus laid the foundation of Spa,—the future rendezvous of political and amatory intrigue of all Europe. The forest of Ardennes smells of early English poetry. It has all the greenwood freshness of Shakspear's scenes; and it is scarcely possible to feel the truth and beauty of his exquisite '*As you Like It*,' without having loitered, as I have done, amidst its tangled glens and magnificent depths. I am living as if I had drunk from the lotos leaf, forgetful of 'friends, lovers, countrymen;' and as to politics, provided the five great powers do not, in their contentions about Luxembourg, meddle with my Spa, and throw back my poetical forest into the cold, clammy grasp of Holland, they may 'take all the rest the world goes round.'

"There is something extremely primitive in this place. The honest inhabitants are principally occupied with a minor and very simple branch of the fine arts, the painting flowers, and their own beautiful scenery, on all sorts of trifling elegancies, fabricated of the wood of the surrounding forest; which, when steeped in the mineral springs, receives a delicate tint, well adapted to form a fine ground for their vivid colours. In one of the little magazines of this domestic industry, where I was bespeaking a portfolio for you, I saw a large folding-screen painting by a delicate and very pretty girl. It represented the circumstances of Margaret de Valois' journey to the Ardennes. The artist was at the moment employed upon a '*halt*,' where a sudden impracticability in the way obliged the royal *cortège* to return on its steps to Liège. There was then no Macadamized road to bowl along, from Namur to Aix-la-Chapelle. She shewed me the coloured drawing from which she was working; such an exquisite thing! the grouping, the costume, so bold, so historical; Marguerite's white palfrey, the obsequious and gallant Prince-bishop, the Queen's handsome and favoured cavalier, so obviously marked: in short, it was a fine '*cavalcade*,' in the best Flemish manner.

"In the corner was written, '*Marguerite*.' One might have thought that the drawing was by the accomplished young Queen herself; but it was *marqué au coin* in more than the literal sense. I knew the style, and was not surprised to find it in the hands of the

Spa artist, by the orders of the Princess of Schaffenhauseu, the patroness of that Madame Marguerite I have mentioned to you, and by whom the drawing was made.

“ The work, it seems, is destined for a residence, *un petit château* in the Ardennes, called *L'Oubliette*, which the *puissante dame* has lately purchased : a strange name, that ; as if that stirring and ambitious spirit who is its mistress ever wished to be forgotten. I offered any sum to outbid the Princess ; but the morals of Spa were proof against bribes. I could not even obtain a duplicate without her permission ; and so the Princess has been written to. She is still, it appears, at Brussels, and does not join the party on the Rhine. She will probably pass through Spa to visit *L'Oubliette*, which, I hear, is a curious antique *gentilhommière*, delightfully situated.

“ I have picked up some ‘ *indigènes*,’ in my wanderings, whose local information and peculiarities give an interest and almost dramatic effect to the place, and whose courteous civilities Timon himself could not resist. One is a Belgian Baron, of a noble Liégeois family, quite a character for a French comedy. He has visited Spa annually from the time of Marie Thérèse, and carries about an album, with the autographs of all the crowned heads who have drunk of the Pouhon for the last sixty years. He turns out to be an admirer of the Princess of Schaffenhauseu, to whom he has been offering *ses hommages* at Brussels. Another is Monsieur le Bourgmestre, a modest, courteous, and very intelligent gentleman ; and the third, a respectable *ancien avocat* of Brussels, who also has spent his summer in Spa for the last quarter of a century, with *madame son épouse*. He takes up the chronicle of Spa just where the Baron leaves off indignantly — at the French occupation.

“ I have another friend, of an humbler class, who has made a part and parcel of Spa, God knows how long, and who looks like the Merlin of the mines. He is a mineralogist, and lives under the craggy heights which overhang the town, in a hovel shining with spars, and filled with minerals and butterflies, made up in boxes for sale, by which the poor old hermit lives. His conversation is full of local information. He has walked and talked with all the *seigneurs et dames venus aux eaux minérales de Spa* during the long period

of his residence here. He pointed out to me the old house '*Le Lauphin*,' in the Grande Place, where, in 1774, lodged the two French celebrities, the *Princesses de Poix* and *de Hennin* (the latter, the rival of Sophy Arnaud), with their circle of Craons, Beauvaus, and Boufflers, the *habitués* of *Madame du Deffand's* salon, of whose absence she so much complains in her letters to Horace Walpole.

“ My venerable cicerone has taken me also to the site of the *Mouton blanc*, the *auberge* in fashion in 1773, when it was occupied by the Prince and Princess de Guiminée. The Prince is registered in the old man's chronicle as '*commandant en survivance* of the gendarmes of the King of France ;' and the Princess, as '*gouvernante en survivance des Enfants de France!*' A little further on is the name of Madame de Genlis, *gouvernante en activité*, I suppose, to *les Enfants d'Orléans*: a curious approximation! Where now are *les Enfants de France*? and where *les Enfants d'Orléans*!

“ We have visited, too, the apartment occupied by the witty Belgian Prince de Ligne, whence he dates one of his pleasant letters. He is recorded in the *Fasti* of Spa as '*propriétaire d'un régiment d'infanterie de son nom*,' etc. I daily tread the promenade where stood the house (since burned) in which the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire and her coterie resided; and I scent the wild and self-sown successors of a garden of flowers, amidst which she bloomed — '*herself the fairer flower.*' I took home with me a published volume of Morning-Post diaries of arrivals and departures of the last century. It contains names and recalls events that stir one even to recollect! Sovereigns, ministers, warriors, celebrities of all casts and predicaments, have for many generations deposited in this paradise some of their mischievous energies: but Spa, long chosen as the favourite mart of every intrigue, the temple of every species of profligacy, is now regaining something of its original romantic quiet.

“ It is the fashion here to hire one of the stout steeds of the country, to dress in a *blouse*, to sling a fowling-piece over your shoulder, and, hiring a guide mounted like yourself, to proceed on sporting excursions into the Ardennes, which extends into the duchy of Luxembourg. I leave Spa to-morrow on such an expedition, and thus equipped. The handsome blue *blouse*, strapped on with a

broad leathern belt, and a large straw hat, are just the most light, commodious, and becoming dress which reason and dandyism could combine to invent. I have two or three motives in undertaking this excursion. In the first place, the royal progress makes Spa one of its stations; my new friends are all in a bustle, and all

‘That world of businesses,
Which by interpretation are mere nothings,’

that have enabled me to vary the monotony of my own *triste* thoughts, are for the present suspended. In the next place, I am in want of more vigorous exercise than this loitering life affords; and I prefer the Ardennes to the Rhine, which I am determined to cut, for many cogent reasons.

“The very idea of the German principalities, and their eternal Badens, with their pompous insignificance and prim solemnities, makes me sick beyond the power of all their waters to cure. Amidst ‘the pleasures of these pathless woods,’ one is certain of not being elbowed at every step by those petty sovereigns of absolute Liliputs, ‘some twenty miles in circumference,’ who, with incomes about the half of my own, expect as much servile homage as the Emperor of all the Russias. They were great nuisances when I was in Germany many years ago, and for ever in one’s way: and now, that many of them have swelled into minor monarchs, despotic as the Grand Turk, by the choppings and changings, the makings and the marrings of the European *top-sawyers*, I can imagine their courts to have become absolutely insupportable. You will tell me that I have contributed my mite to all this; and it is true: but when the arrangement of the balance of Europe was before the cabinet council, other views than those suggested by a journey to the Rhine *par terre et par mer*, predominated. Shut up as the last generation of statesman have been in our own island, it is not very surprising if we blundered a little in our calculations of foreign affairs.

“I have obtained a charming *carte du pays* from my friends, for my tour through the Ardennes and into Luxembourg. My Bourgmestre tempts me with scenes of the golden age of pastoral poetry, and with *chasses* and *battues*, for which Nimrod might have pawned his crown. My old Baron talks of *monumens et*

autres vestiges du moyen-âge; créneaux, donjons, et antiques castels. Ah! Seigneur Dieu! il est passé, ce bon vieux temps. My old gnome of the mines boasts of the exhaustless treasures of the province, the iron, the lead, and the antimony, with a whole geology of various formations; and he has sent me to Martilly, where they fish for river pearls, which he called ‘*Les Marguerites des Marguerites.*’

I must break off abruptly, having just met Lord C. —, on his way back from Frankfort. He is hastening home for private theatricals at Hatfield, and a *battue* in perspective at Strathfieldsay. I trembled lest he should discover my designs upon the Ardennes. He takes charge of this letter, and of some odds and ends of the *fabrique* of Spa, for your study. He is now at my elbow, and scarcely leaves me time to add, that I am, etc. etc. “F M.”

Letter V.

“FROM SIR FREDERICK MOTTRAM TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ.

“Ecternach in the Ardennes.

“DEAR HORACE,—You have no doubt heard of Rome and her seven hills; but never, I dare say, of Ecternach, ‘*la ville aux sept collines.*’ But to begin with the beginning, and give you an idea of my wanderings;—after bagging a whole *battue* of *gelinottes* and black game, starting a stag, missing a boar, losing myself in the endless windings of the forest, and having plunged nearly neck-deep in a torrent, by neglecting the advice of my guide, I at last came in view of a little *donjon*, a tiny château, with its turrets and crenelles, and all the external forms of feudal power in miniature—a toy to put on the round-table of some fair disciple of pure absolutism!

“My guide advised me to apply for hospitality, never refused in these simple regions; and as I was cold, wet, hungry, and fatigued, I took his advice, and we turned up an old woody avenue, and found a peasant smoking at the gate, with a *couteau de chasse* at his side, and a brace of dogs at his feet. I told my tale; and with the most patriarchal frankness he invited me to enter, stirred up the embers of a wood-fire in the small hut antique hall, dried my *blouse*, got me bread and milk, and eggs, *à dis-*

crétion! He excused himself from doing more, because madam the housekeeper (at least so I interpreted his Walloon dialect) was away. Madame had gone to Spa. She had locked up the apartments, and so he could only do the honours by the old vestibule in which he received me. The whole property was, it seems, bought the other day by a Belgian lady for the price of one of Alfred Montessor's gold *nécessaires*. Several boxes of books, furniture, etc. still lay unopened, having just arrived from Brussels. The new *châtelaine* had not yet visited her purchase; but she would no doubt come in time to be present at the fêtes to be given at Spa for the King and Queen. My informant was a *garde-chasse* of the former residents of the château, and had been reinstated with his dogs by the new purchaser, through the mediation of Monsieur le Bourgmestre. He was in unutterable amazement at all the improvements that were making, which he proposed to show me. Of these, the principal one was what he called ' *un jardin anglais*,' where, he said, a shrine had recently been erected to the image of a saint with whom he was not acquainted, or it might be a holy bishop of Liège perhaps.

" ' And the name of your new *châtelaine*?' I asked.

" ' La Princesse de Schaffenhauseu,' was the reply.

" I have now ceased to start at that cabalistical name, and so followed my guide to the *jardin anglais* (a part of the forest in all its primeval beauty, with a few walks cleared, and flower-knots planted on the verge of a sparkling fountain). The image of the saint turned out to be a fine bust of Shakspeare by Chantrey, crowned with a wreath of *immortelles*.

" Do you not give the odious Princess some credit for this? Shakspeare honoured in his own Ardennes! And the garland! — that I should have a claim upon *that*! Yes it was labelled with my name. This garland had been given me by a Béguine in the church of her own St. Beghé at Brussels. I left it behind me at Monsieur Janssens' at the Puterie, who sent it ticketed to my hotel. Leaving Brussels in a hurry, I forgot my garland, as well I might; but here I find it. The bust came ready crowned with it, and was accompanied by an order that it should be placed under a particular tree, the very type of that under which Orlando found his unnatural brother asleep. Oh, genius! what is there in the world comparable to your inspirations? Could you not, Horace, adore this Princess

(if indeed it was to *her* taste, *her* enthusiasm, and appreciation of Shakspeare that this monument is due)? I wrote down a few foolish lines on a card, which I left on the pedestal with an offering of flowers. Both may melt away before any eye shall dwell on them; since none of the *routiniers* tourists will visit the Ardennes. But so long as I shall be capable of recalling one pleasurable sensation, this little incident will be worshipped in my memory and imagination.

“ Having rejoined my guide, who remained in the château to finish the fragments I had left, we set forth on a fresh expedition, finding everywhere hospitality and good cheer among the honest Ardennois; breakfasts for nothing, and dinners for a franc, which the *Rocher* or *Laitier* could not give you for a *napoléon*. On the evening of the second day, my guide had got out of his track, by following instead of leading; and so we might have spent our night ‘under the greenwood tree,’ but for a vesper-bell that tolled us to a little bourg, a *chef-lieu*, in the forest, where I was lodged, not in a Kaiser hoff, or Berlin hoff, or Nassau hoff, or any other hoff consecrated to the greater or lesser divinities of the German Olympus; but still with a *Puissance*; for I was lodged with the Bourgmestre, in the *Hôtel du Gouvernement Communal*, where I feasted on venison and *gelinottes*, drank Rhenish and Moselle, and followed the chase (without fear of game-laws) for two delightful days. But lest you should think that I am boasting, I must ‘rise to explain.’ The good Bourgmestre was an honest peasant of the true Belgian stock, ‘*tête dure et bras lourd*.’ He had played his part in the tiny revolution at Spa, which followed the Four Days; and so he is, in recompense, a magistrate, not indeed clothed in the ermine robe of corporate greatness, but in a *blouse*, rather the worse of the wear. When we asked our host’s advice on the best route to the city of Luxembourg, he opened his eyes, and said,

“ ‘Surely you will not depart on the eve of the fête.’ ”

“ I asked ‘what fête?’ and he replied,

“ ‘*Ma foi, mon bon monsieur*, you must have come from a great distance never to have heard of the fête of Echternach.’ ”

“ Leaving our intentions unexplained as to the fête, we accepted the peasant he recommended to conduct us, and proceeded to Echternach. The guide, as he trotted on before, in dress and figure

was just ready for the opera-comique. He bounded on, by the aid of a long staff, three steps forward, and then two back; apparently practising some strange *pas seul* to a sort of ronde, the words of which I could scarcely catch. Each stanza, however, ended with—

‘ Si nous ne dansons pas
Larira, larira,
Le Diable nous emportera,
Larira, larira.’

“ I endeavoured to stop him, and find out the meaning; but the only answer I could obtain was, ‘ *Saquer Dieu! vous ne savez pas?* not know our fête of Echternach! *Si nous ne dansons pas, larira,*’ etc. And thus we were danced and sung into a most romantic little town, even in the bosom of the Ardennes, or Grand Duché of Luxembourg. Echternach reposes in a rich valley, watered by the Sura, under the shadow of its seven hills, which are crowned to their summits with vineyards. It owes its origin to an abbey of Benedictines. It has had the fate of most Belgian towns; having been given to France by its Spanish despots, and again tossed back to Spain by the treaty of Riswyck. Its surrounding hills are full of game, and I mean to proceed through them, towards evening (firing a few shots on my way), to Luxembourg. And now for the carnival of Echternach!

“ I was awakened this morning by the noise and bustle, not only of the inn, but of *La Grande Place*, on which it stands. On looking forth, I saw hundreds of well-dressed peasantry pouring down from the sunny heights that dominate the town, in holiday garb of every colour in the rainbow, and filling the streets, square, and market-place of the town. The church was the point of assemblage. I inquired from the fresh Luxembourgeoise, who served my breakfast, what was the fête?

“ ‘ *Dam! vous ne savez pas? C’est la fête d’Echternach.* There is high mass, and after that the ball.’

“ It was for this, then, that my guide had been practising his steps. The girl added,

“ ‘ If we only ceased to dance on this day for one year, we should have the devil’s cloven foot once more in Echternach.’

“ This was the first time I ever heard that the devil was scared by dancing and song ; so having a passion for high masses (the last I heard was magnificent, in St. Gudule at Brussels), I joined the procession, and got within view of the church, but no farther. The peasantry were kneeling to a considerable distance, in the open air. Returning to the inn, I found it empty ; so I took my place under its vine-covered porch, where a traveller was already seated smoking a cigar. He was very communicative ; told me that he was an officer of artillery, on his way to Walferdange near the city of Luxembourg (the horse-market of the Low Countries), to purchase for the public service some of those stout horses for which the Ardennes has always been famous. The fête, he said, was a remnant of an ancient religious ceremony instituted to protect the cattle from the malignant influence of the demon. Satan, it should seem, had been in the habit of setting them dancing to his own music, by a spell rivalled by that of Paganini alone. The dance diabolic could only be counteracted by the dance holy, and the demon only beaten at his own weapon. When, therefore, this legend was in its full authority, the whole population, of all ranks and ages, did their best to outstep the common enemy ; men, women, and children, bounding through the country, leaping and cutting, and pirouetting to the sound of fiddles, and to the echoes of their own voices, which reiterated without pause the fifteen notes of the very old tune that was the theme of this curious country-dance, and which still rings in my ears from the guide’s ceaseless ‘ *Larira, larira,*’* I must break off.

“ Ever yours, F. M.”

Letter

“ TO THE HON. MONTAGUE ST. LEGER, DUCHESS DOWAGER OF— —’S,
LONDON.

“ MON BON AMI, — Your despatch arrived this morning, and was

* A more detailed account of this wild legend, and the ceremony arising from it, will be found in that truly national work *L’Artiste*, a periodical recently commenced in Brussels, and dedicated, as the name implies, to the music, painting, and literature of the new kingdom.

laid before the council assembled round the eternal *couchette*. I am desired *d'en accuser la réception*, and to express the satisfaction of their High Mightinesses at your appointment. It is really a distinction for so young a man to be sent to so respectable a court; *d'ailleurs*, cold as an iceberg, and *triste comme mon bonnet de nuit*. Still if Claude Campbell goes as your Sec. of Leg. and you are allowed a few *attachés*, we shall make up a tolerable coterie of our own.

“I have quantities of news from the Home-department; but, unluckily, have mislaid your cypher. *Au reste, tout va son train*, as at Brussels. No. 144 lives *à porte fermée*, by order of her new medical friend, who sings *la mère Medlicot's* hymns to his guitar, *à ravir*, and mimics the Doghertys, *à mourir*. No. 32 drives out in the britzka of No. 110, to see sights and study the picturesque, *entendez-vous?* *Le Page d'amour* takes all in good part, and hums ‘*J'avais une maraine.*’ Poor dear boy! he is moving heaven and earth to get on our embassy, and has written to his mother to attack her old cavalier in the Foreign Office. He says, drolly enough, he is already *half* a Whig—you know why.

“Lord A. reads Paul de Kock all day, and plays *écarté* all night; it is said, with success. Cousin Anastasia, and her inseparables the Doghertys, have niched themselves in the *mansardes* of our hotel. *Ils cassent leurs nez contre notre porte* daily, but have never got beyond the ante-room. You know how Alfred Montessor *fait ses farces*, when he once begins. He, Claude, and the Doctor have actually dyed the Dogherty in a blue bath, and brought on the cholera, of which the Doctor, of course, cured him. We have a regular Carlist conspiracy here, half the faubourg St. Germain. Claude and I waltz every night, at the *salle de bal*; so *je m'ennuie très bien ici*.

“Everybody is hastening back to Brussels, to get through before the Bartholomew puppet-show begins. As soon as Georgina M. has a good interval, we shall start. I shall wait there for your orders. *En attendant*, kiss dear grandmamma for me. Did she like her black silk mittens? Put in a word, too, for the diamond agrafe. One must *far effetto*, as the representative of majesty.

“Count Cat'selbow is here. He and Alfred are great friends. The Princess has shaken us off. I believe she said true enough,

when she called her castle on the Rhine a *château en Espagne*. It is rumoured that her late husband's heir is going to law with her, and that she will lose her estates in the Rhingau. Alfred says that, even so, she will be immensely rich. *Il s'y connaît, le bon homme*. In haste, et *sans adieu*,

“ Ever yours, F. ST. L.”

Letter

“ TO HORACE HARVEY, ESQ. ETC.

“ Spa.

“ HERE I am again ! No letters, a great disappointment ! a posse of English, a great bore ! They are now parading the streets under their umbrellas (for the rain is falling in torrents), and are making faces at the Pouhon, or tossing over the bagatelles in the toy-shops, till the hour for *redoute* and *roulette* shall arrive to afford relief to their *ennui*. I have had a sort of bird's-eye view of the Duchy of Luxembourg, which does not exactly accord with that which I took of it from my study in Carlton-terrace. Luxembourg is so *enclavé* in Belgium, so naturally situated to form a part of the kingdom, so much a *sine qua non* of its existence as a nation, that to abandon it to Holland will undo the whole arrangement recently sanctified by the adhesion of the five powers. Imagine the King of Holland having a capital city within forty-four leagues of Brussels, with a fine Macadamized road, to march at a moment's notice upon its citizens ; or to launch a conspiracy from,—packed in an omnibus or a *diligence anglaise*.

“ This is one of the cases in which parchment rights go for nothing ; the great natural right of self-preservation superseding all human arrangements. Belgium must insist upon the possession of this province, under penalty of political extinction ; and the five powers having adopted the independence of Belgium as an element in their system, are bound in common sense and consistency to provide for the consequences of their own act. If the rights of Holland are valid, she has not (and, while the present system continues, will not have) actual possession ; so that deference to William is a mere

form : while the leaving so great a matter unsettled, and a ready make-weight to throw into any other dispute that may arise, is the shortest road to a general war. The present protocoling farce that is playing in Europe at the expense of Belgium, and ultimately of Holland too, now appears to me a lamentable weakness : and here, as elsewhere, ‘ to be weak is to be miserable, doing or suffering.’ In pacing through the beautiful solitudes of this fine province, my mind, disengaged from passion, ran back upon the recent diplomacy connected with it, and thence to the general European policy of the party with whom I so long acted ; and the result has been a conviction that, whatever may be the merits of the theories we adopted, our ignorance of details led us into many false measures.

“Luxembourg is a magnificent district, though in many respects, I am told, a *pays vierge*, and its resources not yet rendered fully available ;—forests, rivers, mines, vineyards, lovely valleys irrigated by gushing streams, and its highest hills feeding cattle even in the heart of winter. How I should like to hear ‘ the music of my hounds’ in the woods of Aulier and Cedrogne ! This is the region of the artist, the novelist, and the sportsman. Its wooded heights and deep-embosomed glens perpetually disclose some feature of moral or picturesque interest ; a fragment of Gothic architecture, a cross with its inscription, a forester’s cottage, a miner’s hut, or one of those small *castels*, or rather *gentilhommières*, the monuments of another race than the robber-barons of the Rhine. Their forms are quite as pictorial as the narrow perilous holds of the magnificent river ‘ where power dwelt amidst her passions, and where each lordly bandit did

‘ His evil will ; not less elate,
Than mightier heroes, of a longer date.’

“I have almost concluded the purchase of one of these secluded *châteaux* (four leagues from Luxembourg, and twenty-eight from Brussels), which has seized on my imagination. I can reach it, from my house in London, in less time than the Duke of Devonshire takes to arrive at his castle in the south of Ireland, or Lord Londonderry at his residence in the north. There is but one hitch in this business : I should like, first, to know whose subject I am to become, and whose

wild beasts I am to hunt. I have some, not very pleasant, recollections of the forest laws and usages of Germany. I was once shot at (by mistake) for a poacher, in a *busch-gang*, in Hesse Darmstadt; and in Hesse Homberg, I was called off from a *track* (a cowardly sort of butchery of game, where great lords and ladies fire at the animals driven towards them by the country people), to hunt an unfortunate peasant, who had shot a hare, and who was hunted by the illustrious Nimrods, with much more ardour and zeal than they would have shown in chasing a chevreuil or a boar. As yet, I have met with no such impediments in this country. I have only had to ‘find out the forester,’ and ‘being in the vaward of the day,’ to pursue my sports till the going down of the sun.

“I envy the antiquary or the artist who for the first time visits the city of Luxembourg, the *Augusta Romanorum* of ancient geography. It was one of the points in the defence of the Roman empire against the irruptions of the Northern barbarians; and the kings of France, considering it in the same light, have always regarded its possession by the Germans with grudging and an enforced submission. Accordingly, it has ever been an object of dispute in all the long succession of European wars, from the siege by Francis the First of France, to the present times. This you will say, is a reason the more for confiding it to Belgium, a neutral power, in whose hands it will no longer be the instrument of national ambition—the weakness of one power, and the tyrannous strength of another.

“Luxembourg is the Gibraltar of this part of Europe; and its mines and counter-mines plunge as deep towards Tartarus as its fortifications rise towards heaven. Attached as a military dependence to the German empire, its civil possession as part of the dissolved kingdom of the Netherlands, was a curious anomaly in sovereignty; and the inhabitants (if *they* indeed go for anything in diplomacy) are anxious to be reunited with Belgium, as well to escape the chances of war, as to re-establish the natural relations which exist between countries which God has joined, and which no man ought to put asunder.

“I have found here a public library, once very rich, and which still contains some curious manuscripts; particularly one of the ninth century; another, a Chronicle of the First Crusades; and a third, a beautiful Pliny’s Natural History, of the thirteenth century, recently

bought *for twelve florins!* Where was Horace Harvey when this purchase was in the market! This collection has arisen from the destruction of the neighbouring convents, and especially the Abbey of Dorval, whose chronicles were the sources of the middle-age history of France, Germany, and Belgium.

“I am interrupted.—A courier has just spattered and clattered through the tranquil streets of Spa. He has dropped me a despatch from Lady Frances, dated Baden. Her party go no farther, in consequence of the illness (or caprice) of Lady Montessor. The Confederation of the Rhine (to use their own jargon) is about to break up. Lady Montessor (says my wife) pants after England, ‘there to return and die at home at last.’—At last! She has been dying, in public and in private, at midnight assemblies and mid-day levees, for the last three years. Lady Frances makes a very polite apology for not joining me at Spa, as she proceeds direct to Brussels, where she hopes to meet me; though she thinks it more probable that this happy event will take place at Mottram Hall. All this is sheer farce; but I have no objection to return to Brussels. I have many reasons for wishing to see the Grand Anniversaire; and have half promised the Baron de Stassart to do so.

“I am, it seems, to have a copy of the skreen. Mademoiselle Lavinie L——, the young Spa artist, has read me a letter from the Princess, containing a very courteous acquiescence. She (the Princess) is still in Brussels, and will remain at her villa of Groenendael to receive her English friends. This is all of no consequence to you, but much to me;—how much, you shall know before long. Direct to Brussels. It is hardly three weeks since I left it: yet it appears three ages.—Adieu! “F. M.”

Letter

“TO CORNELIUS MACDERMOT, ESQ., ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
SHANBALLYMAC.

“Baden.

“DEAR MAC—Would I advise you to give in to Mrs. Mac’s great desire to come on a tower to the river Rine in Germany? Why,

thin, npon my daisy, I would not; and, mind my word, sorrow thing ever ye did would make a greater Judy of you than that same. Stay where you are, man alive; where, as the song goes,

‘ You ’ve everything dacent about ye
A snug little cabin and farm,’

with the best bit of red bog in the county to your rare, and the river Shannon forenent you, that’s worth all the rivers that iver flowed, since the flood, and before. Oh! Cornelius Macdermot, if I had ugly drames about this journey before I undertuck it, it’s now that I know, in undeniable experience, that it ’s the greatest of amadauns I made of myself the day I quit Shanballymac; for, save and except my providential discovery of that garlogh of mine at Brussels, and the having set him up, sir, in the handsomest hotel and restorong (I’ll throuble you for change for that) in Europe, as I tould you in my letter *via* Mrs. Rafferty, and, barring that, sorrow else but sorrow and sickness, and every sort of murther and ruination, I’ve seen and known since I crossed the threshold of home.

“ Well, sir, in obedience to your request, I now sit down to fulfil your commands, as to the journey, and other things too numerous to put in a letter. We left Brussels in our own boroche; and, by that rogue of a Docthor’s advice, with veterinary horses to go on all the way to Colone with us, where all the Hungary water comes from. My Lady, and her frind, Lady Anny-Statius Macanulty, and the Frinch lady’s-made, and a tombore (maning a bandbox) full of caps and things, inside; and self and Kitty Kelly in the dicky-box, with the currier, as they call the Frinch foreign servant hired for us by Lady Anny-Statius, who does nothing but smoke a meer sham pipe; and if the whole is not a mere sham from beginning to end, or will turn out so, I’m intirely mistaken.

“ Well, sir, the divel be in the Docthor, but he put his *comether* so upon the quality at the Belle-view, that he contrived to flop himself into one of their fine coroneted carridges; saying, as we were all to travel together, and put up at the same inns, it would come to the same thing. And so, sure enough, we started from the post with them; but they soon gave us the go-by, and left us behind, and were at Aichs-la-Chapel, while we were still trapesing over the battle of

Watherloo, buying up ould brass buttons; Lady D. crying for an ould batchelor of hers, one Ensign Roudlum, of Cloneen, who fell here in the Heavies; and Lady Anny-Statius looking for the tomb, in the church, of her second cousin, General somebody, and other Lords and haros of her acquaintance: nor did we ever more set eyes on one of them, good or bad, until we overtuck them in this outlandish place; and only then itself owing to my Lady and her noble frind looking into all the inn-books, and cross-questioning the waiters along the road about great English Lords and Ladies, saying he had lost them on the road—*lost* them, oh musha!

“All this time, mind ye, Cornelius, that little-do-good, young Mr. W. W. Macanulty, (to get rid, I suppose, of his ugly ould wife,) started before us to prepare the way, as he said; though we never saw an iday of him, till he came down philandering on board the Damp-ship, as the Garmans call it, (and damp enough it was, for certain,) from out of one of the islands in the river Rine, in company with an ould English gentleman, and his daughter and son-in-law, a furren Count, with a *busheen* of slack hair on his face would stuff a mattaress, and just that sort of a buggaboo-looking fellow that would frighten the life out of you, if you met him in a loan place, for all his star and ribbon, and being a great officer, as Mr. W. W. tould us, in the Prussian service, and his particular friend.

“Well, sir, there you have us now on board the stamer, or Damp-ship, on the river Rine; and if you have, all I can tell you of it is, that it is no more to our own Shannon than I am to the Duke of Leinster. And if it put me in mind of anything, it was the new line between Carrigeenglass and Criggan-na-beeagh; neither house, nor tree, nor potatoe garden, to be seen or heard, so that it's going to Liverpool I thought I was all the time. As the morning was could, and the rain pouring like ramrods, and the cabin choke-full, and every one calling for breakfast, and not a screed of a cloth on the table, I settled myself on deck close to the stame-chimley, to get an air of the fire, till I was as full of smuts as a chimney-sweeper. For I've lost my appetite intirely since I left home, and only just takes *my morning*, which, with a drop of schnaps in the middle of the day, keeps me going till dinner.

“Well, sir, after a time, up comes our ladies, reeking with the hate, saving your prisence, to see the prospects; and Lady Dogherty

sprawling over her maps and books to find out the names and places of the ould castles ; but the divel a one of the real ones she saw, barring the pictures. And it's small loss she had ; for such bathered-down, old gazebos you never clapped your two good-looking eyes on. Neither stick, barn, nor bawn ; but just a scare-crow sort of a thing, stuck up on the top of a craig, like an ould raven's nest on the highest bough of a rookery.

“ So, sir, when my Lady began her parley-vous with Count Smutch, turning up the whites of her eyes, and calling us all ‘ pilgrims of the Rine,’ as if it was to Patrick's Purgatory we were going in the Shannon ! and spouting poetry, like ‘ Diveldoubt’ in the Christmas mummeries, with the young Countess, (who is in her honey-moon, and a nice little pullet,) I couldn't restrain myself ; ‘ And I wonder at you, Kitty D.’ says I, ‘ renaging your own country—you that has seen the castles of Portumna and Mount Shannon, and Ballymac-Egan, and Bally-na-leen, and the other great castles on the Shannon, where there's smoke in the chimleys, and fire on the hearths, and claret in the cellars, and whiskey in the halls, and plenty everywhere.’

“ ‘ And does the Rine,’ says I, ‘ run like the Shannon, two hundred and thirty-four navigable miles, from mouth to mouth ; containing eight lakes, and more, from Limerick to Leitrim ; and washing ten counties, Kerry included ; and has it a Knight of Kerry, and a White Knight, all alive and kicking, not all as one,’ says I, ‘ as them ould pirates up there, in their ruins?’

“ ‘ Then, as for poethry,’ says I, ‘ there has been more purty verses makes on the Shannon than on any river in Jermanny :’ and so I lilts up the ould song—

‘You may thravel the wide world all over
And sail from France to Ballinrobe.’

“ Oh, thin, maybe the company wastn't highly delighted, and such clapping of hands and bravoos ! and maybe my lady wasn't ashamed of herself ; and Lady Anny-Statius blushed as blue as a blanket ; and the ould English gentleman, one Mr. Tyler, from London, that we tuck up at the island, tould me, if he had known as much as he does now, it's on the Shannon Steam Company he had bought shares,

and not on the Island of Rolandsack, where his daughter was abducted by Count Smutch from a bourding-house where they stopped, and where his son lies buried, who died of the cholera, (Lord save us !) with ating too much fruit and other unwholesomes ; which shows, as that rogue of a Docthor says, we should be on our guard, and keep to a regement, and beware of the savouries !

“ So, having said my say, I slipped down to the bar and got a glass of schnaps, and fell asleep on a sophy, in a fine room they call the pavillion ; and never saw more of the river Rine, till I was landed at the White Horse in the town of Mens, a poor ould barrack of a place, full of soldiers — and a poor donny set they were ; and that’s my opinion of the River Rine, which is a regular ould humbug.

“ Well, sir, here we are at the world’s end, lodged in a fine hotel, with our friends the Marquis and Marshuness, owing to the cleverness of Mr. W. W. Mac. And maybe I didn’t give the Docthor his congy ; and would never set eyes on him agin, if I hadn’t been near kicking the bucket, by getting the blue cholera with ating too much bully and sour crout—an excellent furren dish, which I mistuck for beef and cabbage. And so, sir, nothing would save my life but an hot bath prepared for Lord Alfred, which he good-naturedly sent to my bedside ; and the smell of it would kill a cat. But it’s bluer I came out of it than I went in ; and had the clargy to me to clear off ould scores, and made my will, settling everything on my Lady, except a bit of a codicil I kept back with regard to the garlock in Brussels and other persons—mum !

“ But after all, sir, that divel of a Docthor recovered me ; and so we shook hands, and are all to return together to Brussels for the fates. And W. W. is going to Frankfurt, to Mr. Cock the great banker, to fetch back his money. He insists on paying me interest and principal when he comes back from Brussels, which is more than I expected ; and Lady Anny-Statius has written to the Marquis of Thomond, to get me made Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the county of Kerry ; and wishes I was in it,—which I will, plaze God, to ate my Christmas pudding : And am yours till death,

“ I, DOGHERTY.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUR DAYS, 1833.

THE month of September 1833 was marked by a general movement, vibrating between the capital of Belgium and the ancient and gloomy cities of the Rhine, and giving life and motion to those silent, stagnant holds, where princely and priestly domination have so long held, and still hold in abeyance, minds whose energies, though latent, are not extinct. Three years of Belgian peace and prosperity had consolidated the revolution; had permitted prejudice to yield to curiosity; and had converted the timidity of foreigners into confidence. Travellers once more proceeded to the Rhine and the watering-places of Western Germany by the magnificent towns and noble roads of the Low Countries; and tours were taken by all parties, for all purposes. Paris poured forth her *élégans* from the Chausée d'Antin, and her *vieilleries* from the Faubourg; London emptied her new West-end, and saw her bon-ton reduced to its 'last man:' even *l'ultima Irlanda* contributed her portion of absentees, the representatives of her fancy and feeling, fun and ferocity; and more than one Scotch *feelosopher* took up his scrip and his staff, in search of German transcendentials and a German meerschaum, with the hope of enveloping himself in the double cloud of smoke intellectual and smoke material, the common attributes of Kantists on both sides the Channel.

Those ancient allies, gallantry and diplomacy, took the same route in the same vehicles; and, mounting their britzkas and barouches, their *calèches* and post-chaises together, were charged with missions in which tender hearts and crowned heads were equally involved. *Attachés*, devotedly attached, followed in the train of the stateswomen they served; intrigues of the cabinet and intrigues of the boudoir worked well together; exchanges of vows and of treaties, alliances matrimonial and political, mutually assisted each

other; while all found a tour to the Rhine, a trip into the Taunus, or a peep into Frankfort, a conducive medium or a convenient excuse for their respective enterprises.

While the Emperors of Austria and of Russia were holding their *tête-à-tête* conference of seven days at Munchen Gratz, exchanging (says the legitimate journal of Frankfort) 'proofs of mutual confidence and attachment,' and laying plans for the future liberty and happiness of—Italy and Poland; while the King of Prussia, *en galop*, between Potsdam and Berlin, was directing the sword and grammar exercises of his squadrons and classes; the King of the Belgians was quietly and unostentatiously progressing through the free and prosperous country, to which he had been called, in opposition to the unjust aggressions of the great despotic powers, upon the principle of self-government. He was accompanied by his young and gentle Queen, and the few Belgian gentlemen and ladies who formed his staff and circle.

In all the great towns and smaller bourgs, from Brussels to the Ardennes, he was received, not with '*des cris mille fois répétés*,' like the twice rejected Bourbons; but with the frank and honest expression of sentiment, which evinced a people satisfied with the object of their choice. * Everywhere the arts furnished the modes of the royal reception; and music, painting, and specimens of national industry, formed the offerings made to their King, by a people who had given arts and manufactures to Europe before Italian schools and Italian looms had illustrated civilization with their magnificent productions.

Brussels, in the absence of the King, and in the interval between the two flights of the birds of passage, was occupied, in its Chambers with legislation, and in its streets with preparations for the anniversary (then fast approaching) of those four days which had relieved it from the tyranny of a foreign government, imposed by force, and perfectly unsuited to the wants and desires of the people. The decree for the celebration of this festival had been issued by the National Congress. The programme had been determined and signed by the Minister of the Interior, and by the council called the '*Régence*.'

* At Vervier, the King having observed to the Burgomaster, '*qu'elle protégerait toujours l'industrie*,' the Burgomaster replied, '*Il n'y a pas besoin; ça va bien comme ça*.'

Composers, artists, architects and mechanics, all the talent and all the patriotism of Belgium, were called into activity to celebrate with propriety an event in which all were interested. The beautiful city seemed as if cleared out, to leave scope and verge enough for their operations. Hotels, restaurants, hotels garnis, were empty, and preparing for the reception of guests expected from all parts of the kingdom, and from nearly all parts of the Continent, who had previously bespoken apartments in anticipation of the solemnity.

By the 22nd of September, Brussels swarmed with strangers; some purposely to partake in the festivities, as in a carnival; others to enjoy their feelings of triumph in the success of their own painful sacrifices and persevering exertions. Many were led by a pure love of the arts to be present at the national concerts, to bring their works to the exhibition, or to inspect the productions of the new Flemish school, in their respect for old Flemish masters. Many of the French and English fashionables, who had served out their time at Ems, Wisbaden, Baden, and other prescribed baths, had chosen the Four Days for their passage through Brussels, to avail themselves of its amusements; and the English gentlemen of the turf, who had horses to run, or who were led by a sporting spirit to the race-course of Montplaisir, were already assembled in the Bellevue, the Flandres, and the Hôtel de l'Europe.

Among the latter, the Marquis of Montessor and Lord Alfred were conspicuous. They had returned to Brussels before the splendid *Brigata*, with which they had been rather joined than associated; and which had only advanced on their return as far as the *Grand Monarque*, at Aix-la-Chapelle, to repose in the most sumptuous of hotels, under the care of the most courteous of landlords. Other hopes than those to be tasted at Montplaisir had hailed the return of Lord Alfred to the neighbourhood of the Groenendael; while the Marquis, completely out of his element at Baden, where there was no ballet, was glad to accompany his brother into what he termed a '*pays civilisé*.' He found ample occupation and amusement in the rehearsals of the *service funèbre* at St. Gudule, of the 'Faust' by M. Pellaert, and of the new opera of M. Messmackers at the theatre.

On the morning of the 23rd, shortly after daybreak, a salvo of cannon announced the arrival of a day, which recalled to some, the

loss of all they had loved ; to others, the triumph of all they desired ; and to the majority of the nation, that well-fought battle in the heart of their metropolis, which had won for them their independence.

The dawn of that day, in 1830, had been an awful epoch. Brussels *cernée* by the royal army ; the public functionaries dispersed, the city abandoned to the people and to a few brave gentlemen, with no ramparts but their barricades, no sound to cheer them but the toll of the tocsin, and the universal cry of 'liberty and arms.' Prince Frederick of Nassau had determined to carry Brussels by a *coup de main* ; but the people, without leaders, and with a force composed of volunteers, Gardes Bourgeoises, and the gallant band from Liège, were equally determined to defend it with all the energies of despair. The heroes of the barricades took their position.

On the previous night it had been agreed that resistance should be attempted ; and in the morning the royal army advanced to the attack. They moved on the city by the four roads of Flandres, Laeken, Schaerbeek, and Louvain. Each column had its artillery and a numerous cavalry ; and batteries were erected to protect their advance :—the people had only their barricades, and the obstinate enduring courage of their national temperament. The four hostile movements were executed at the same moment. The first cannon was heard at a quarter past eight ; and it was answered by the combined toll to arms of every bell in Brussels, which ceased only, at the set of sun, with the enemy's fire. Without, an army ; within, an undisciplined population, consisting of men, boys, women, and children ; each gate of the city became the scene of a pitched battle.

The first victory, so humiliating to the Dutch troops, so glorious for the people, was obtained at the Porte de Flandres. At the Porte de Laeken, the enemy was simultaneously repulsed, and fell back on Prince Frederick's head-quarters, behind the Botanic Garden. But the main point of attack was the Porte de Schaerbeek ; and it was made with a force of more than seven thousand combatants (the double of the whole real force of the citizens). From this gate to the Park, the road lay through open spaces, protected by the fewest and least efficient barricades. At the moment of attack, there were but about sixty men posted at the gate, mostly of the free corps of Rodenbach and Niellon, and some Liégeois. Under

the fire of the enemy, they chose for themselves a captain of the name of Hildorf, who, when his leg was broken by a bullet, continued through the whole day, from a neighbouring house, to conduct the defence.

It was through this route that the Dutch troops forced their way to the Park, after a murderous resistance; and they reached their destination by a rapid march, more resembling a flight, pursued by the fire of the people from every window and vantage-ground. The defenders of the gate itself, finding their post no longer tenable, repaired to the Observatory, to renew their efforts against the enemy.

At half-past ten, the Dutch were masters of the Park, and, it might have been thought, of the city; but, whether through cowardice, ignorance of localities, or want of tactical knowledge, they suffered an old artilleryman, 'Charlier, *jambe de bois*,' to protect the passage from the Park into the Place Royale with a single gun; and he, with about twenty men, posted without order and without a leader, in the windows of the Bellevue and the coffee-house de l'Amitié, kept in check eight hundred disciplined soldiers. By twelve o'clock, the Dutch troops were confined to the ground they occupied; the moral force of the citizens was developed, that of the soldiers subdued, and the ultimate fate of the city decided.

Such were the events of the 23rd of September in 1830—about to be commemorated in 1833. The morning was fresh and brilliant. The tree of liberty, planted in the Place Royale, bore the tri-coloured flag of Belgium. The beautiful Grecian peristyle of the *église de Caudenberg*, converted into an orchestra, was draped between its Corinthian columns with the national colours. Every house was decorated, every balcony bannered! Every avenue teemed with peasantry, pouring in, in their gala-dresses, to celebrate the anniversary of the day in whose conflicts they had participated. The numerous *corps de musique*, convoked for the national concert to be given to the people, marched in, with banners flying, by the gates of Anderlecht, Flandres, Laeken, and Louvain;—those gates against which the enemy had, three years before, made their sanguinary attacks. The music of Grétry, Rossini, Mayer, and Fétis, succeeded to the roar of cannon and the toll of the tocsin. The museums, public libraries, galleries, and exhibitions of pictures, were thrown

open to a people who, three years before, had been steeped in blood ; and who now, with a noiseless pleasure, a deep-seated and tranquil satisfaction, were standing in quiet wonder before the representations of their national scenes by their own national artists. Everywhere a sort of respectful deference was paid to a little band, dressed in a particular costume, with glazed hats and tri-coloured plumes. Maimed, pale, haggard, (some on crutches, and some supported by friends,) they were announced in a low tender tone by the demand of '*Place aux blessés.*'

The day of the 25rd closed, as it began, in peace not altogether divested of melancholy ; for at the setting sun (that sun which, in 1830, set over a scene of blood), many hearts sank, and many eyes were wet, as '*la sonnerie des morts*' slowly chimed forth from the belfries of every church in Brussels.

The feeling of pride and sadness which closed the solemnities of this day, was deepened by the ceremony which opened the morning of the 24th. That day had been the bloodiest of the city's contest with a foreign foe. It was on that day that Brussels had been bombarded by the royal batteries, and that the temporary success of Prince Frederick's army was marked by pillage, devastation, and massacre. The battle was then still raging in its streets ; every house had been converted into 'a house of mourning : ' and, on the anniversary of that day, the memory of its disasters still gloomed the spirits of the people who had resisted, and finally overcome them.

On the morning of the 24th, a funeral service was celebrated in the church of St. Gudule, by that grandest and most imposing of forms and sounds, a requiem mass. Never, in the days of her bold Brabantian Dukes and splendid Burgundian Princes, had the capital of the Low Countries beheld in her metropolitan church a scene of more picturesque, more magnificent ceremony : never did the vast nave of St. Gudule re-echo to sounds of greater force, or carry the hymn of grief home to suffering hearts with greater effect.

The choir was occupied on either side by the King and Queen, the two Chambers, the municipal authorities, and foreign diplomacy, all in deep mourning. The nave, the aisles, the chapels, were crowded with the multitudinous people to the very steps without the portals. In the centre of the nave rose a black cenotaph, on

which was inscribed the names of the victims who had fallen in the four days' fight. Before it, bent many a hooded head, and knelt many a proud but weeping heart ; some mother, who, like Rachel, would not be comforted ; some affianced and plighted bride, whose wedding veil was now changed for the coif of the *Béguine*, or the black crape of the Sister of Charity. The comrade, too, was there, who had fought in the same fight, and had performed the last offices—the friend, the brother, the son, Beyond these, the surviving band, the *blessés*, offered the tribute of their gratitude to Heaven, alike for the dangers they had encountered for their country, and for their restoration to reap the fruits of their victory. Even the most indifferent of the spectators had their feelings excited to a vague but powerful emotion by the music of a hundred voices, accompanied by as many martial instruments, mingling with and swelling the organ's solemn peal.

This imposing and almost awful ceremony was followed by another not less affecting. The whole congregation of St. Gudule, led on by the King and Queen, the senate and representatives, the ministers, the municipality, and the military, proceeded to the Place des Martyrs, where, over the tombs of those who fell in the Four Days, a funeral hymn was sung, of which the whole population of Brussels were the auditors. The day concluded with music, performed in the antique forum of Belgian liberty, the Grande Place ; in front of the Hôtel-de-Ville ; in the Places des Barricades, La Monnaie, and Le Sablon.

All honours done to the gallant dead, and reverence paid to the feelings of their surviving friends and companions in arms, the two remaining days were devoted to recreating the spirits of the people, and to the amusement of their foreign visitants. The 25th was a day of brilliant bustle, of unclouded gaiety ; and of general but temperate enjoyment. It seemed as if the whole peasant population of Belgium were pouring in the one direction, in cars, waggons, and carioles, or on foot. The centre of attraction was the race-course of Montplaisir, where the King's cup was to be run for, and prizes of less distinction assigned to the victors. To this point the French calèche, the English barouche, the German britzka, rolled in slow procession ; while cavaliers, grooms, and jockeys, the sons of the turf of all countries, hurried on,—a spectacle in itself to the good

Brabançons, who were seated in groups, under trellised porches of their guinguettes and restaurants, on the road-side.

The course of Montplaisir, like other courses, had its royal stand-house, its pavilions for the rank and fashion of all countries, its umpires, its clerk of the course, etc. all mounted on the English scale. A day the most brilliant and exciting shone upon an amusement in which all took a share, from the prince to the peasant; and was followed by an evening still more diversified by its amusements. The theatre was thrown open to the people, the best places being reserved for the *blessés* : and for those who, after the old Flemish fashion, preferred the enjoyments of the open air, there were rural sports prepared in the environs, the bar, the ring, the dance *à la ronde*, and music everywhere. The night closed by an illumination.

The 26th of September, the last of the four days, signalized in 1830 by a second bombardment of the city, and by the glorious cry of victory and the deliverance from the Dutch army, was dedicated in 1833 to a review of the troops by the King, to popular games given at mid-day by the city to the people, and to the '*Concert monstre*,' executed in the open air in the Place Royale by the bands of all the Belgian regiments and the several amateur societies. The evening was devoted to the theatre, where the King and Queen were present; and the night closed with a second illumination of the public and private edifices, including the lofty and light spire of the Hôtel-de-Ville, and the Gothic towers of St. Gudule; a spectacle of singular and striking effect, visible over the wide plains of Belgium for many miles.

It was on this last day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, that a *cortège* of English carriages, loaded with imperials, tambours, cartons, and lady's-maids, lords, ladies, and lap-dogs, approached Brussels by the Route de Namur. It must have been a matter of surprise to the travellers to find the faubourgs deserted and silent; yet never had the *guinguettes* and other places of public resort been so tricked out. Triumphal arches crossed the road; garlands and bouquets of flowers hung over every door, and ornamented every window. There were merry-go-rounds which did not go round, wooden horses without riders, and feasts laid out in decorated arbours, which no guest had yet arrived to touch.

Three carriages had already passed on; but as the last of the train (a rickety calash that with difficulty kept up with the rest) approached the Porte de Namur, a voice from an occupant of the rumble commanded a halt; and the calash drew up at a small, whitewashed, green-shuttered auberge, decorated with the sign of a harp, and the motto of ‘ *Caed mille faltha;* ’ above which was inscribed,

‘ HÔTEL D’IRLANDE,
AUBERGE ET RESTAURATION,
PAR MONS. LAURENCE DE FEGAN. ’

The windows of the Irish inn were thrown open, gay and garish with garlands and devices; while the general silence of the deserted faubourg permitted the accents of a singular song, accompanied by an untunable violin, to be heard.

To the musical query from a bard, who sat in the window,

“Why don’t you sell your fiddle,
And buy your wife a gown?”

from without, and from the rumble, was answered,

“ I will not sell my fiddle
For all the wives in town,
And if I sold my fiddle
The folks would think me mad,
For many a rollicking day
My fiddle and I have had.”

A shout from the window and an exclamation from the rumble, were followed by the rapid descent of a bilious, bloated elderly gentleman, who was received at the porch in the embraces of Larry Fegan: it was Sir Ignatius Dogherty.

Turning to his fellow-travellers, he dismissed them with the intimation, “ Yez may go where yez like; but the divel a foot further I’ll go till I get a drop of something to wash down the dust; for I’m choking alive with the drouth.”

“ *Continuez, continuez, Monsur le Cocher,* ” exclaimed Lady Dogherty, in great confusion.

“ Eh ! gude God, the mon’s mad ! ” observed Lady Anastasia Macanulty. “ What does it all mean, my Leddy Dogherty ? ”

“ It means, Lady Anastasia,” said Lady Dogherty to her noble fellow-traveller, “ that Sir Ignatius, previous to his leaving Brussels, set up a favourite servant, that in Ireland is called a follower of the family——”

“ Yes, yes ; one of the clan.”

“ Exactly, my dear friend,—one of our clan, in that hotel ; and, with his usual generosity, he stops there now just to contribute something to the house-warming. But we will proceed, if you please.”

“ Eh ! gude God, to be sure. We shall lose all the royal festivities else.”

“ *Continuez, Cocher,*” said Lady Dogherty. “ *Et vous, Monsieur le Currier,* or, I should say, *Herr Muncher, ollez au Bellevue, Herr Muncher, sive ou plait !* ”

The old rickety machine was the next moment again enveloped in the clouds of dust which the lighter and more elegant vehicles had thrown up behind them in their rapid route. But either the suddenly increased velocity of the calash tested its fragility beyond its powers of endurance, or some unobserved obstacle disturbed the even tenor of its way, and frightened the horses from their Flemish propriety ; for precisely at the outside of the Porte de Namur, the whole concern, with its cumbrous freight, came with a crash to the ground, pitching the courier on one side the road, and the Ladies Dogherty and Anastasia Macanulty, with the lady’s-maid, into an enormous pile of vegetables on the other.

The proprietor of the stall, like the rest of his confraternity, had abandoned his little market to take a glance at what was passing within the gates ; and so deserted was the spot, that no one appeared to offer assistance to the prostrate sufferers. The courier was disabled by a fractured limb ; the postilion dared not leave his horses ; and the ladies, more frightened than hurt, were still moaning amidst carrots, cabbages, and onions, when a light and elegant vehicle came flying past. From humanity or curiosity, it was suddenly stopped by its sole occupant, an English gentleman. His agile leap over the side of his carriage brought him at once to the assistance of the objects of his solicitude or inquiries.

Her dress steeped and stained with the juice of a crushed water-melon, Lady Dogherty, breathing of onions, and bleeding from the nose from a too rude contact with a red cabbage, was the first object that presented itself to the chivalry of Sir Frederick Mottram ; who with some difficulty, and more violence to his own risible faculties, raised her from the ground. Her Ladyship, with a promptitude of perception which no accident could blunt, where rank and fashion were in question, immediately recognised her deliverer ; and with her usual mincing tone, and, as she imagined, graceful manner, expressed her hopes that he was well ; regretted they had not met at Baden, where she would have had much pleasure in presenting him to a real German prince, her friend Count Katzenellenbogy ; and made her never-failing inquiries for the Duke of Devonshire and the Duncannons, and a passing observation on Lord Chesterfield's last work, which she had in her hand, she said, at the moment of her frightful accident.

Lady Anastasia, " less studied in a sad ostent " to play the part of Lady Teazle in a basket of vegetables, claimed the acquaintance and aid of Sir Frederick, with the ease of a woman of the world, accustomed to make use alike of friends or enemies, acquaintances or strangers, as the exigence of the moment might require ; and while the maid was shaking out the now, alas ! well-worn Erin-green pelisse of Lady Dogherty, she took possession of Sir Frederick's arm, dusting her canzou with her handkerchief in her disengaged hand, and coolly exclaimed,

" Eh ! gude God, my dear Sir Frederick, what would have become of us, if we had not the gude fortune to meet you, and to have your carriage ready to take us into the town ? There never was such a disaistrous journey as we hae made from Aix-la-Chapelle, — all owing " (and she lowered her voice) " to these excellent, but poor dear, vulgar people endeavouring to keep up with my cousin the Marchioness's party, who hae been shirking them at every step sin we left Brussels ; for they hae no their ain carriage, poor creatures ! and this crazy concern is just hired, do you see, for the occasion. But don't let us lose time, Sir Frederick ; you'll just order your carriage to draw up, and allow it to set us down at the Bellevue, or we shall be too late for any of the gaieties. "

" We must first look to that poor wretch, " said Sir Frederick,

pointing to the courier, who was now assisted by Sir Frederick and his servants (but still continued looking round for the fragments of his pipe and pouch).

“Eh! leave him with the postilion,” said Lady Anastasia. “Yonder is a cabaret, and we’ll leave our maid to take care of the things, and tie up the old machine. Come, my dear Leddy, we shall be too late for everything.”

Sir Frederick, however, insisted on replacing the wounded Herr Muncher in his own rumble, with his own courier to take care of him; and then, with a feeling of deep mortification, which even his humanity combated in vain, he placed the two ladies in the post of honour of his calash, and throwing himself sulkily with his back to the horses, proceeded along the Rue de Namur, which opens at once upon the Place Royale.

At that moment the Place Royale was the *salon* of Belgium, where the sovereign and the people of all ranks were assembled to hear the most extraordinary concert that was ever performed to the most multitudinous and attentive of all audiences. As the carriage flew along, it passed the *cortège* of English vehicles which were drawn up at the corner of the Rue des Petits Carmes, where it was stopped by a sentinel. The two ladies’ heads were instantly thrust past Sir Frederick, so as completely to exclude his view; while the protrusion of Lady Dogherty’s bulky proportions threatened to add suffocation to the calamity. Tender inquiries after the fatigues of the journey were addressed to the occupants of the carriages, with a narrative of the speaker’s own misadventures, in which Sir Frederick’s name was mentioned with the epithets of “kind friend,” “old travelling companion,” etc.

Sir Frederick was little ambitious of sustaining the character thus thrust upon him, before the audience which he suspected to be present; he therefore opened the opposite door, and let himself out, for the purpose of cutting his ridiculous protégées, *sans tambour battant*, and escaping unseen into town. He sidled along therefore, his hat drawn over his eyes, and his eyes glancing from beneath his hat. The first carriage he recognised was his own,—the very easy, luxurious travelling chariot which Fegan (whose name over the Hôtel d’Irlande he had just read with infinite amusement) carefully sent back from the Tower-stairs to Carlton-terrace. He

looked no farther, but increased his speed ; and finding that pedestrians were permitted to pass, though carriages were not, he entered under the arch which opens into the Place Royale from the Rue de Namur, and found himself in the midst of a scene and a society, and within hearing of a music, which, taken altogether, combined the most extraordinary spectacle ever witnessed in modern times.

Sir Frederick placed himself close to the left of the church of Caudenberg, the central point to which all eyes and ears were directed. On an elevated *estrade* in the front of the peristyle, whose columns were hung with trophies, an orchestra of six hundred musicians were performing the national hymn, the *Brabançonne*, to an audience of many thousand persons. The still and breathless multitude filled the vast and beautiful area of the Place Royale to its utmost boundaries, stretching onwards to the right along the Rue Royale and the Park, descending the Montagne de la Cour in front, and filing off to the left through the spacious Rue de la Régence and Rue de Namur, as far as sounds were audible or objects visible.

The audience was composed of many generations ; old men supported by their grandchildren, and babies on their mother's bosoms. In the strictest sense of the word, it was the Belgian people. Within a slight boundary of frame-work, over which some hundreds of red rude arms were leaning, sat the legislative representatives of the people, the public authorities, and such foreign guests as applied for admission by the sacred name of strangers. Without the barrier, stood the promiscuous multitude ; and above their heads, in the windows of the surrounding architectural edifices, were crowded the higher classes, native and foreign : the public Hôtels de l'Europe, de Flandres, and the Bellevue, contained their own guests ; and the other buildings sparkled with the beau-monde of the country !

In the balconies of the Hôtel de Mérode stood the King and Queen, the *état-major*, and a numerous society of Belgian gentry, brilliant in uniforms, or in the gaiety and freshness of a Parisian morning toilet. There was no military array, no body-guards. A sentinel stationed at the various entrances into the Place, to prevent the entrance of carriages from disturbing the music by their roll, was the only obstacle to the approach of all who could find standing-room ; and not a gesture or a word disturbed the solemnity of the scene, or the exquisite harmony of the concert.

Sir Frederick Mottram forgot the adventure in which he had a moment before been so ludicrously involved; his narrow escape from the Montessor party, and from his own wife. He forgot all personal considerations. The scene he gazed on, the persons he beheld, the music he listened to, absorbed his whole attention, his imagination, and his feelings.

It was a curious sight to witness a member of the feudal aristocracy of Germany standing forward as the elected chief magistrate of a free people; to listen to a national anthem, the dirge of despotism! It was a singular event so see the descendant of Henry the Fourth, a daughter of the House of Bourbon, listening to the music of the *Marseillaise* and of the *Brabançonne*. It was gracious to behold, in the ruddy countenances of the assembled multitudes, the evidence of a people who have strictly realized the vague wish of her best ancestor, having each *la poule au pot*, or something more substantial. But more remarkable, more striking, was the solemn silence, the deep and profound spirit with which these hymns to liberty were heard. There were no *vivats*, no expulsions of sentiment, such as those with which France is accustomed to hail the freedom she has so often and so bravely struggled for, and so often and so lightly resigned. The pervading feeling was that of men, in earnest in all they do; and who, though they may again be overwhelmed, as in former times, by masses, will never be subdued in spirit: for the *têtes dures des Flamands* are at this day precisely what they were when Phillippe-le-Bon of Burgunday reproached them with the temperament which resisted even his splendid despotism, and which they derived from their remotest ancestors, the sturdiest and the most awakened of the Franks.

The concert was concluded with a round of applause; and the multitude dispersed as quietly as they had assembled, pouring down the streets and avenues, and along the shady walks of the Park, each to his habitual or temporary home, to repose or to regale, in readiness for the *gratis* representation of the theatre, for the fireworks, or for the illumination of the Tour St. Michel, (the beacon political and religious of the good people of Brussels).

Sir Frederick still retained his seat under some floating draperies, to which a member of the chambers had courteously conducted him. A slight shower, which fell with the concluding bars of the concert,

to the damage of many a *chapeau rose*, and *robe bleu céleste*,* gave him an excuse for keeping to his shelter, and it enabled him to watch, unseen, the *entrée* of the English carriages at the conclusion of the ceremony. His own travelling chariot led the way, occupied within by Lady Frances and her maid, and without by her livery-servant and page. Lord Aubrey's britzka followed; his Lordship and Lord Allington on the dicky, their two foreign valets within, and a courier and livery-servant behind. The third carriage contained Lady Montessor, stretched at full length on piles of cushions, and accompanied by her own woman, and Dr. Rodolf de Burgo; and on the coach-box were Mrs. St. Leger and Claude Campbell *sous le même parapluie*. A sort of sumpter carriage closed the march, laden with footmen, maids, a green monkey, a grey parrot, and a French dog; the latter three articles recent purchases of her Ladyship, and intended for her menagerie in London. After a moment's interval, Sir Frederick's calash appeared with the Ladies Dogherty and Macanulty. The whole cavalcade passed slowly through the dispersing but still dense crowd, and drew up at the *porte-cochère* of the Hôtel de Bellevue.

Apartments at a high price must have been retained at the Bellevue; for the whole party, received at the gate by Lord Montessor and a host of English beaux, alighted and entered. Not so the ladies occupying Sir Frederick's carriage. After an altercation of some length with the porter and waiters, they drove to the Hôtel de Flandres and de l'Europe; and then, to the owner's mortification, he beheld his carriage slowly winding down the Montagne de la Cour, his servants still keeping their seats. His first attempt in his own behalf was to seek his old apartments at the Flandres; but they, with every other room in the hotel, had been occupied for the Four Days, excepting only that one appropriated to the obliging hostess herself, who resigned her family *entresol* in his favour, till the clearing of her house on the following day should leave the suite he had previously occupied *au premier* disengaged.

A spot wherein to repose independently of his wife and her party

* The freshness and elegance of the Belgian toilet on the occasion of the morning festivities of the Four Days was very conspicuous, and had a very brilliant effect, particularly upon the occasion here described.

being thus secured, he sought the solitude of the now silent, empty Park, to concentrate his thoughts, calm the perturbation of his spirits (ruffled beyond his power to control them), and to arrange something like a plan of conduct, not only for what might occur during his short residence in Belgium, but, as far as his wife was concerned, for his future existence. The soft, drizzling shower, which had caused such a rapid dispersion after the grand concert, was still falling, mingling with the rays of a bright evening sun. The Bassin Vert, the usual centre of the promenaders, was now deserted, and a thousand odours were exhaling from the dewy tufts of flowers which embalmed the adjoining bosquets of acacias and chesnut-trees.

To avoid the chance of obtrusion, Sir Frederick descended into one of the *bas-fond*, where the intertwining foliage renders retirement so facile, and affords a calm and delicious retreat in the bosom of a busy and bustling city. And now, breathing freely, and for the first time raising his eyes, he was about to throw himself on a bench, when he perceived that it was already occupied by a *Béguine* in full costume. She was leaning thoughtfully on her arm, and a small basket lay by her side. He instantly retreated. Associations more powerful than his will to overcome had rendered every circumstance and person connected with that order interesting, and even agitating to him; and before he had reached the summit of the acclivity by which the *bas-fond* is quitted, he was seized, first with a suspicion, and then with a conviction, that the absorbed and pensive Sister of St. Beghé was the Sœur Greite of St. John's at Bruges—Madame Marguerite herself.

He paused for a moment, struggled with his feelings, his hopes, his desires, and his plighted promise; but an impulse stronger than all beside combated and conquered every wiser and more prudent thought. He returned upon his steps, and, bursting through the interwoven branches which formed an umbrageous bower over the seat he had left, he found it empty. The *Béguine* had disappeared, but, in the hurry probably of escape, had left her little basket behind her.

The dense skreen formed by the luxuriant shrubs concealed the path she had taken. He took up her basket, which contained only a programme of the fêtes, some flowers, and a large drawing-card,

on which was sketched, with the most characteristic fidelity, and with a bold but feathery touch, a view of the scene recently exhibited in the Place Royale. The *Béguine*'s coif was obvious among the listening multitude, leaning over the barrier of the reserved seats. The noble façade of the Caudenberg formed the back-ground; and among the many heads grouped to the right of the spot where the artist stood, it was just possible to distinguish one figure, holding back the drapery in which it was shrouded;—that figure was his own.

The *Béguine*, then, who had mingled among the people on this triumphant day, and who had taken this felicitous sketch, was the artist of the Ostend *trekschuyt*—was indeed Madame Marguerite. He arose; and was already hastening along the path, the forgotten basket serving as an excuse for overtaking the owner; but as he passed in front of the military orchestra, with his glass to his eye, and looking in every direction in search of his object, he perceived the plain, dark calash wheeling away from the iron gates, which open on the Place Royale, (the white coif of the *Béguine* just seen behind its curtains :) the next moment it was out of sight.

He was now no longer in a mood for tranquil meditation or sober resolve; still less for a rencontre with the members of his wife's party. He returned to replace the basket where he had found it, first buttoning up the drawing within his coat: and, after an hour's pacing under the shade of the plane-trees which shadow the eastern alley of the Park, he returned to his hotel—having finally resolved, to resolve on nothing! to leave everything to the chances, and to do the *decencies* (as he mentally phrased it) by immediately presenting himself to his wife and her party.

On arriving at the Hôtel de Flandres, he found his own carriage entering the gateway; it having deposited the wounded courier under medical care, and dropped the Ladies Dogherty and Macanulty without the Porte de Namur; the Hôtel d'Irlande being the only shelter they could find, after traversing Brussels high and low, “*d'un bout à l'autre*,” as Sir Frederick's valet expressed it. The man added, with a very sly look, that “their Ladyships had requested him to present their thanks, and requests that the carriage might set them down at the theatre in the evening; but that, as one of the springs was broken, he had assured them *de son chef*, that *that* was quite impossible.”

To dress, and to send a penciled note to Lady Frances, announcing his arrival, were Sir Frederick's occupations for the succeeding half-hour. The following penciled answer was returned :—

“ We had already learned from your friends (I believe I should say your *relations*) the Doghertys, that you had arrived—I am happy to hear, in perfect health. We are all very incommodiously lodged here; but as I share the room of my dear (and, I fear, dying) friend, Georgina Montessor, it matters little to me. I am glad you are better provided at the Flandres, as I know how much you are put out of your way by want of comforts. We are dressing for the theatre, (a gala night, and the King and Queen going,) having taken a morsel *au bout du banc*, by way of dinner. We have places in the Princess of Schaffenhhausen's box; pray join us. Alfred Montessor sends you his bone; as our men won't honour the Citizen King with their presence, even though tempted by the society of our Grande Princesse.”

A bitter but irrepressible laugh followed the perusal of this cool and inconsequent *billet*. The dear friends of the dying Lady Montessor dressing for the theatre! The whole was a sedative; and he determined to take his wife and her patry on their own terms, and to give the conjugal rendezvous, (after an interval to which a crowd of strange and unexpected incidents had given an artificial length,) in the box of the very woman who had been one of the most urgent causes of their recent separation.

In referring to Lady Frances's note (between his soup and his *pâté*), which he had at first only glanced over with irritated rapidity, the words “ I believe your *relations*, the Doghertys,” struck him first as a joke got up by the party, and then as an insult, a palpable hit at *other* relations, whose unpretending respectability had not secured them against the insolent mystifications of Lady Frances's noble friends, nor him from her own impertinent and unfeeling reproaches. He tore the note in a thousand pieces, finished his dinner, drank more than his usual quantity of wine, and then set forth for the theatre, flushed, and flurried with a thousand conflicting feelings and strong excitements.

The streets of Brussels, so tranquil an hour before, now resembled one of those fairs of ancient times, which, in the palmy state of the Hanseatic league, assembled at their great marts the population

of half Europe. Persons of every condition and costume were pouring forth to watch the fairy lights gradually kindling along the platform of the towers of the cathedral, or sparkling with fantastic beauty over the spire, and even to the arrow on the summit, of the Hôtel-de-Ville.

It was with extreme difficulty that Sir Frederick threaded the crowd in the Place de la Monnaie, and fought his way to the theatre, and found himself at last at the open door of the Princess of Schaffhausen's box, which was crowded to excess, and resounded with the buzz of many languages. The theatre itself was thronged to its summit, the pit and balcony crammed to suffocation. Opposite, and on the right-hand side of the stage, sat the King and Queen of the Belgians. The King's Staff occupied the box on the left.

Whoever has seen the parade of an Irish Viceroy's visit to the theatre, in what Dean Swift styles "wretched Dublin, the capital of wretched Ireland;" whoever has witnessed an armed force conducting a respectable lady and nobleman from one neighbouring street to another, to pass an hour or two at a play; whoever has on that solemnity heard the clattering of cavalry, and the word of command given by the officer of the guard; and seen the entrance of the Lord Lieutenant and his Lady, in court-dresses, into a box draped and decorated with the bygone insignia of feudal royalty (tiny pages holding up regal manteaus, aide-de-camps, comptrollers and stewards of the household, gentlemen ordinary and extraordinary, with state physicians in solemn black, and state beef-eaters in short petticoats and long halberds, all filling up the pageant), whoever has seen this, and estimated it as such things were once estimated in Ireland—as the Doghertys and the Doctor de Burgos still estimate them,—would think very little, or rather would think nothing at all, of a '*spectacle gala*' honoured by the presence of royalty at Brussels theatre.

In the simple, plain box of their Belgian Majesties, the ladies and gentlemen who accompanied the Royal Family did not stand behind them the entire evening, deeming even a lounge against a wall a luxury. There were no pages, comptrollers, physicians, dancing-masters (of the ceremonies), gentlemen ordinary, or gentlemen extraordinary; but, *en revanche*, the peaceful tranquillity and attention to the play were not interrupted by any uproarious expres-

sions of party feeling, by oranges flung at the heads of the unhappy actors, or bottles at the objects of all this pageantry. No factious air was called from the gallery, nor opposed by another factious air demanded from the pit; not a prisoner was made, nor a head broken. For nothing in the histrionic chronicles of nations less resembled a viceregal visit to the theatre of Dublin, than the visit of the King and Queen of the Belgians to the theatre of Brussels on the twenty-sixth of September 1835.

Sir Frederick Mottram stood at the threshold of the Princess of Schaffenhhausen's box, just able to see, over heads lower than his own, the royal party and the opposite side of the theatre. It was a grateful and splendid sight! The piece performing was '*Le Mariage Impossible*.' It had been chosen appropriately, as being the production of a Belgian author, Monsieur Grisar of Brussels, whose brilliant *début* had been hailed with compatriot triumph.

There were some points in the play which the Princess of Schaffenhhausen's box might have applied to themselves; but these persons were in themselves a drama, and occupied with their own parts. In the front of the box sat the Princess and Lady Frances Mottram, each with a cavalier immediately in waiting, leaving the tops of the ladies' heads alone visible from behind. The *blonde coiffure*, wreathed with pearl, of the English lady, was contrasted by the jet-black head, bound simply with a diadem of brilliants, of the foreigner. Between both sat, or rather fidgeted, the frivolous *chiffonnée* impersonation of *Herbault's last*—Mrs. St. Leger; her *chapeau rose* flaunting its vapoury marabouts in the faces of the many aspirants for her universal smiles, who hung about her and filled up the box to its farthest verge. Among the men were Lords Aubrey and Allington (less of the *extrême droite* than the brothers Montessor, who were at that moment playing a family-game at *écarté* with Doctor de Burgo at the *couchette* of Lady Montessor); and Claude Campbell, with his fair tresses confounded with Mrs. St. Leger's marabouts, evidently the favourite of the day.

The rest, though chiefly English, were unknown to Sir Frederick. He stood, therefore, patiently awaiting the conclusion of the first piece, leaning against the frame of the door. At the dropping of the curtain, when the box was thinned by the temporary departure of some of the gentlemen, he advanced, and was recognised by

Lord Aubrey, Lord Allington, Claude Campbell, and Mrs. St. Leger. Lady Frances's head was turned to the adjoining box, and almost touching that of a young and beautiful person, on whose bright countenance sat the immortal bloom which poetry gives to Hebe, and painting fails to realize. She was talking to the French Ambassador—the young, the good, the beautiful Countess de Latour Maubourg.*

The Princess, on the contrary, was stooping down her diademed head to some one who was addressing her from the balcony below. A garland of crimson roses binding the crimson brows of Lady Dogherty, marked her as the person thus distinguished by the “observed of all observers.” The Princess appeared to excite in many of the audience much admiration, mingled with profound astonishment; odd doubts of the fidelity of their own senses, or of her identity, were heard to escape their lips; and the title of Schaffenhause, coupled with the name of Madame Marguerite, was heard on every side. Lady Frances at last drew back her head, and turning to address Lord Aubrey, found seated in his place—her own husband!

The recognition was cool, courteous, brief: one word on the last accounts of their son, another on the health of Lady Montessor, and then a broken sentence, an unfinished phrase, with an infinite deal of nothings, about nothing, and tending to nothing. On the re-entrance of Lord Aubrey, the bon-ton husband instantly resigned his place; and was joining Mrs. St. Leger, who, with Claude Campbell, was now perched on one of those high seats which flank the private boxes facing the proscenium in the theatre of Brussels, when Lady Frances, tapping his arm with her fan, said, “I suppose I may now present you to the Princess of Schaffenhause, the patroness of *your* friend Madame Marguerite?”

Sir Frederick felt the blood mount in his face, in spite of every effort to maintain an *aplomb* equal to the cool impertinence of his

* The death of this lady, a few months after the epoch here described, cast a shadow over the elegant and rational pleasures of Brussels; and left an impression of regret on all hearts, even on those of her slightest acquaintance, not yet dispelled. The Countess de Latour Maubourg was daughter to the celebrated Count Daru.

wife's speech. He answered, however, composedly, "I shall be happy to have the honour."

Lady Frances bent forward her head and whispered the Princess, who nevertheless waited to finish an audience obtained by the persevering efforts of Lady Dogherty. She at last slowly and carelessly turned half round.

"Sir Frederick Mottram desires to have the honour of being presented to you, Princess," said Lady Frances, half laughingly, half ironically.

"Sir Frederick does me honour," said the Princess, turning full round, in all the blaze of beauty and brilliants; the one enhanced by the blush that mantled on her cheek, and the fire that sparkled in her eye; the other relieved by the black head and robe by which they were contrasted. It would have been difficult to conceive a more striking picture than that presented at the moment by this splendid original. It struck even the *nonchalant* Lord Aubrey that he had never before seen the Princess so handsome; it struck Sir Frederick Mottram that the Princess of Schaffenhäusen was—Madame Marguerite; that Madame Marguerite was the Princess of Schaffenhäusen;—that . . . that . . . that he was himself drunk, dreaming, or mad!"

The foreigner who had been leaning over the back of the Princess's chair now arose, and, with the true courtesy of a foreigner, offered his seat to the stranger. The offer was promptly accepted, if not with equal courtesy: Sir Frederick dropped into it. The Princess resumed her seat; the curtain drew up, and the gay *petite pièce*, '*La Gageure Imprévue*,' began amidst a cry from the pit of "*Chut—chut—silence!*" The Princess pressed her finger on her smiling lip with a significant air; the *causeries* of her box ceased, and all eyes were directed to the stage, to the relief of all who had nothing more to say, or who had more to express than words could tell, or eyes communicate.

Sir Frederick Mottram rested his hand on the back of the Princess's chair, his head upon his hand; and his quick respiration disturbed the only vagrant tress which had escaped from its brilliant confinement and floated on her marble neck.

The farce finished, the curtain dropped, the audience rose; and the departure of their Belgian Majesties, like their entrance, was

followed by the unanimous acclamations of respect of the entire audience. But not one servile exclamation, not one party word, not one *flagornerie de circonstance*, disgraced the free expression of respectful good-will, which honoured those who offered, as well as those who received, it.

Lady Frances gave her arm to Lord Aubrey, Mrs. St. Leger hers to Claude Campbell; the Princess took Sir Frederick's, which was hesitatingly offered.

"Pass on, Princess," said Lady Frances, with an arch smile and significant nod of the head, and standing back to make way for the greater lady.

The Princess took her precedence. Her carriage was the first up; and she had reached the portico of the theatre in unbroken silence, save the utterance of an '*au revoir*' to Lady Frances, as she passed her. She was already in her carriage, and her chasseur was on the alert to close the door, when Sir Frederick asked in a sharp tone —

"And I! have not I a right to demand an '*au revoir*?' Have not I fulfilled to the letter the conditions imposed?"

"Then make one effort more," was the reply: "fulfil them in the spirit, and then"

"What then?" he asked, grasping firmly the hand which struggled for its release.

"Why, *then*," she said, bending down her head, and softening her voice to a whisper—"then

"Nous nous reverrons un jour,
Pour raconter de nos fortunes :
Oublions donc nos amours ,
Quoi qu'elles soient bien importunes.
Qui plus y perd , plus y a mis—
C'est quit à quit , et bons amis."

She kissed the tips of her fingers, and drew back: the footman closed the door, the glass was raised, and the coachman received the word—'*Au Pavillon de Groenendaël*.'

The rain was now falling in a light, pattering shower, that scarcely dimmed the brilliant fireworks which shot athwart the midnight air.

The crowds hurried from the theatre and the Place de la Monnaie to the Porte de Schaerbeck, to the Boulevards, and along the Rue Royale; the great object of the people being to see the last representation, which was to close the national festivities in honour of the anniversary of the Four Days. The fireworks represented the façade of a temple, on which was inscribed, in letters of living light, the simple phrase.

‘ 26^{me} SEPTEMBRE. ’

The happy multitudes read it with enthusiasm. There was one among them, ‘ not of them, ’ who read it, too, with a strange and deep interest; to whom it was a date, an epoch, never to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE OLD PALACE.

THE Four Days were over; the national fêtes of the anniversary of the Belgian revolution had terminated; and in the universal movement of the dense population which had filled the streets of Brussels, no riot, no disorder, not the faintest disturbance had arisen. The Hague might (as it was averred) have given its orders to excite commotion: not even an accident had occurred to interrupt the harmony, the solemnity, or the enjoyment of the festivity.

A short altercation on the race-course, not known beyond the parties concerned in it, between an Irish son of the Turf (or of the bog) and a Belgian groom, had occasioned more mirth than anger. It arose out of what was called the ‘ *course des chevaux indigènes*, ’ in which a *vermeil* cup was to be contended for; when the sporting Hibernian had offered (in his own phrase) to *insinuate* his black colt, Paddy Whack, in the place of a Belgian horse, which he characterised as ‘ a cratur that would rather die than run. ’

The proposition, in itself an insult, was followed by such *déni-grant* observations on all horses in general not bred for the Curragh of Kildare, and all Belgian horses in particular, by the Irish gentleman, as threatened a prompt appeal to other means than a reference to '*les jurés*;' but the interference of Lord Montessor, Lord Alfred, and some English gentlemen, turned the whole affair to their own account of broad fun. The sporting Irishman, who had said more bitter things of Belgian racing than it might have been safe to translate to his adversary, was promised a fair field for his colt on another occasion; and having, in the true spirit of squireen chivalry, given his card, it served the double purpose of announcing his name, and recommending his hotel, for it was inscribed 'Comfortable Irish In, by Monsieur Lawrence Fegan, Aubergiste, Hôtel d'Irlande, Porte de Namur.'

The fêtes, however, though over to the letter, continued in the spirit; and amusements both private and public detained the steps of the gay, and furnished an excuse to the idle for still lingering in Brussels. The exhibition of pictures remained open; the city had offered a brilliant ball to the King and Queen, and to all the strangers of note then in the capital. The splendid and hospitable mansion of the French Ambassador was twice a week the rendezvous of the elegant and the gay; and the British Ambassador gave agreeable dinners. The delightful operas of the '*Zampa*' and the '*Pré aux Clercs*' were performed to full houses, alternately with the representations of Madame Dejazet, one of the most charming of modern comedians.

It was in vain, therefore, that the '*Députations Orangistes*' departed to London, Frankfort, Toplitz, to solicit the restoration of the House of Nassau, and to represent the Belgians as in the deepest distress, commercial, financial, and political; as supporting with reluctance the revolutionary government, and ready, *les armes à la main*, to effect a counter-revolution. The Belgians continued, notwithstanding, to dance, play, and sing; to applaud the '*Zampa*,' to attend the races of Montplaisir, and to study the pictures in the exhibition, crowding the avenues of the old palace from the opening to the shutting of its gates.

The several members of the Montessor party had each a motive or a necessity for remaining. The Marchioness, whose illness was

no longer a *tic*, or a means of coquetry, could not travel—at least so Dr. de Burgo averred; and all who were, or affected to be, interested in what was whispered to be her approaching end, would not leave her.

Lord Alfred and Claude Campbell alone had broken off from an association to which both, in a certain degree, had become *à charge*. The latter had been recalled into service, and went in hopes of negotiating for the office of secretary of Legation to his friends Mr. and Mrs. Montague St. Leger. The young diplomatist had left England deeply enamoured of his cousin and godmother Lady Frances Mottram; he quitted Brussels quite *engoué* with his *confidante* and playfellow Mrs. St. Leger, who had been the first to announce to him that he was superseded in the good graces of *sa belle marraine*, and the only one to console him for an infidelity, which had but anticipated his own by a week, or perhaps a day.

Lord Alfred had quitted Brussels suddenly and secretly; in dudgeon, in debt, and in utter disgrace with more than one of his party. He had run horses and lost at Montplaisir; and had actually left a large sporting debt unpaid to the fortunate owner of Paddy Whack, the master of the Hôtel d'Irlande, Porte de Namur. He had played *roulette*, and been cleared out at Baden. He had lost an enormous sum at billiards to Count Katzenellenbogen, at Aix-la-Chapelle, which his brother had paid. But his debts to the man of rank being discharged, Lord Montessor drew up his purse-strings, and declared off. Lord Montessor had shared his brother's hopes, and was even positive of his ultimate success with the Princess of Schaffhausen; and it was not until he had been himself the bearer of a second proposition on Lord Alfred's behalf, on the morning of the last day of the anniversary, that the cold, firm, and indignant refusal of the Princess convinced him that, in his brother's technical phraseology, it was 'no go.'

All farther ways and means therefore being cut off, Lord Alfred, on the evening when the little piece of '*L'Escroc du Grand Monde*' was performed, enacted himself one of its scenes, and made an abrupt exit from Brussels, which by no means elicited the plaudits of his creditors, nor proved satisfactory to the friends and associates he had left behind him.

Lady Montessor, meantime, had been removed to a splendid man-

sion in the Rue Ducale, the hotel of an absent Belgian noble, who was waiting upon circumstances in his chateau near the Dutch frontier. The Bellevue had been voted close and incommodious by Dr. de Burgo, whose opinion, while it met the desires of the whole party, was more expressly calculated to suit the interests—of himself.

The members of the Montessor family had each their elegant apartments detached and independently of each other; but Lady Frances, the most devoted of friends, occupied a *lit de repos* in the Marchioness's dressing room, and shared with Lord Aubrey those tender duties, that, in English high life, often produce scenes in which feeling and folly, piety and profligacy, are so strangely mingled. To such scenes and such characteristics a close parallel is presented in the history of French society before that revolution of which they were the precursors, and, to a certain degree, the occasions; and whoever has read the memoirs and letters of that epoch, will find in the circles of the Choiseuls, the de Grammonts and the Boufflers, of the d'Epinays, Du Deffands and the Espinasses, types of the habits and morals of particular sets among the highest class of the modern English oligarchy.

Sir Frederick Mottram neither resented the incivility of not being included in the arrangements of the hôtel in the Rue Ducale, nor objected to the earnest request of his weeping lady, to be permitted to remain with the dying Lady Montessor, for the short time which it might please Divine Providence to spare her to her sorrowing friends. The intentions of Heaven, however, on this subject seemed anything but fixed. The autumnal skies, which wept and smiled alternately upon Brussels and its lingering guests, were not more changeable than the health, spirits, and looks of Lady Montessor.

Occupying an apartment which recalled all that is most splendid and tasteful in the boudoir of a Parisian *petite maîtresse*, (for all Belgian ladies do not 'live in kitchens,' and dress in 'bedgowns,') she sometimes drew her coterie round her easy-chair, where, sheltered from the sunshine by skreens of living jasmine and other odoriferous plants, she was all life, gaiety, and frolic. At other times, seated in the *demi lumière* of drawn draperies, she congregated them round the fire, where she lay shivering in cashmeres, on cushions of eider-down, with one cold hand clasped in her husband's

and the other in that of—Lord Aubrey, —fragile and faded as the flowers over which she moralized.

Lady Frances, meantime, sobbed over her tapestry ; Mrs. St. Leger dropped pearly tears over the pearl purse she was knitting for Claude Campbell ; and Lord Allington sketched clever caricatures of the whole group in the fly-leaves of his Rabelais, which he was now reading *avec délices* for the first time.

At other times, again, Lady Montessor would insist on her friends adjourning to Sir Robert's box at the theatre, or to the musical promenades of the Park ; and when they returned, she fell into hysterics of laughter at the absurdities discovered or mystifications enacted at the expense of friends and foes, natives or foreigners. Again, she was found in hysterics of tears, complaining of the neglect and seeming want of sympathy of those for whom she had lived and made such sacrifices, (and she turned her eyes on Lord Aubrey.) “ She was abandoned,” she said, “ to the skill and care of one who, however skilful and kind, was still a stranger ;” and then Doctor de Burgo threw down his eyes, and muttered something of ‘ professional duty,’ ‘ intense sympathy,’ and ‘ devoted respect.’

Au reste, the clique lived as exclusively to themselves in the Rue Ducale, as they could have done in all the most fastidious jealousy of an overflowing London season, when cousins come from the country, and exacting constituents threaten an incursion of the Goths and Vandals. The gentlemen, however, went once to the Chamber of Representatives, as a matter of mere curiosity : they were accompanied by Lady Frances and Mrs. St. Leger, old frequenters of the Duchess's box in the House of Lords, and well-known *habituées* of the ventilator of the House of Commons.

The exclamations of the Tory stateswomen at the elegance and accommodation of the handsome tribune to which they were conducted, were sufficiently audible to excite the attention of some of the young members immediately beneath them. The eloquence of the *orateur* who at their entrance was in possession of *la parole* was deranged. He was one to whose ears the lowest lisplings of female accents were familiar. The tonsured head, clerical precision of toilet, *ton patelin*, and sly sidelong expression of countenance, declared him to be equally devoted to the service of the church

and of the ladies. It was the Abbé de F——, the spiritual director and *vert-vert* of the *Dames Anglaises de Bruges*, the *bel esprit* of the English coteries of that city and of Brussels.

Singularly enough, the subject of his eloquent discourse was a woman ; and his speech was sufficiently personal to attract the attention of the English party, who, like Horace Walpole, '*aimaient les noms propres*,' and who were almost tempted to encourage the speaker with a 'Hear him, hear him !'

On the Abbé's resuming his seat, the sudden rising of the member for Bruges excited universal silence : he was one who never rose but to command it. Concise, witty, and rapid, the speech of Monsieur Jullien had the point of an epigram, and the close cogency of a logical argument. The chivalrous championship he assumed 'for the nonce,' admitted of all the gaiety and playfulness which are the peculiar characteristics of his somewhat French eloquence ; and carrying, as he did, the gallantry, if not 'the sense,' of the House along with him, his reply to the Abbé's philippic produced that '*grande hilarité*,' which, in the language of the English journals, may be translated '*continued laughter*.'

Lady Frances and Mrs. St. Leger were amused up to their bent. "Do you know," said the latter, "that this is infinitely more entertaining than either of our Houses?"

"Yes," said Lady Frances ; "one tires of everything in the long-run—even of dear old Eldon's tears, which used to affect one so very much."

"And then," said Mrs. St. Leger, "there is some difference between the fresh air of this delightful box, seeing and seen, and our mounting to the ventilator at St. Stephen's, and thrusting one's head through pigeon-holes, to inhale an atmosphere of smoke and candlesnuffs."

"Or to be treated," said Lady Frances, laughing, "with black tea and tallow-lights, by some rising young member, a candidate for our *soirées* and pic-nics."

"Come," said Lord Aubrey, gravely, "this is antinational ; and, worse still, democratic and revolutionary."

"And yet," said Lord Montessor, looking round at the beautiful edifice and commodious arrangement of the chamber, "this is a splendid thing ! I scarcely know an Opera-house in Europe superior :

and whenever the Nassaus recover their authority, and put down these Jacobin clubs, it will make a delicious *salle de spectacle*. Here are private boxes, you see; and a pit and two tiers for the public. By the bye, how crowded they are! only look!”

“They are open, I suppose, to the *canaille*,” said Lord Aubrey; “for you see there are men in *blouses*, and women in the dress of the Campine.”

“Yes; but what elegant toilets in the front row! I’d swear that is a *nœud d’Herbault* in the *chapeau de paille de riz*,” said Mrs. St. Leger.

“And look at the nun in the thick of it all!” said Lady Frances. “I never saw a real nun before; though I went as one to the Dowager Lady Lansdowne’s masquerade.”

“That is a *Béguine*,” said Lord Montessor, “I have often thought a ballet of *Béguines*, in the high grotesque style, would be very effective. It would beat the dance of the dead nuns in ‘Robert le Diable’ hollow.”

“There!” said Lord Aubrey, “you have all stared the poor *Béguine* out of countenance. She is off. Who would think she could see anything under that penthouse of stiff linen?”

“Humph!” said Lord Montessor, “I have my suspicions of that sisterhood. I saw a friend of yours, Lady Frances, in full chase of one, not very long ago.”

“Why, there is Sir Frederick, I declare!” said Mrs. St. Leger, “stuck to the wall like one of the pilasters. Oh! now he sees us, and is struggling to get out.”

“Pray let us meet him,” said Lady Frances, with a mischievous laugh; “I have not seen him for five minutes since I introduced the Princess to him.”

The next moment the whole party were rapidly descending the beautiful flight of marble stairs which descends to the Doric vestibule. Sir Frederick was already at the entrance, talking to a gentleman, whose quick, intelligent eyes seemed to have assumed their spectacles to conceal their penetrating and observant glances. It was Monsieur Nothomb, the secretary of state. He had given Sir Frederick rendezvous at three o’clock, to show him certain diplomatic curiosities; and it was now a quarter past. The gentlemen were walking away together, when the English party came down upon

the English politician, with other expectations than that of finding him with a minister of state.

“ Mottram,” said Lord Montessor, “we have lost our breath in running after you ; do stop a moment.”

Sir Frederick turned round abruptly, and not much amused by the rencontre. “ Lady Montessor,” he said, “is better to-day, by your all being here.”

“ So well,” said Lady Frances, with unusual cordiality, “ that she insists on our dining with her ; and has charged me to engage you to be of the party.”

“ I am engaged,” said Sir Frederick, coldly.

“ You are always engaged,” muttered Lady Frances, poutingly, and passing the hand she had withdrawn from Lord Aubrey’s arm under Sir Frederick’s. “ Will you come with us now, to see the pictures ? There is a sort of Somerset House business here, they say, that is very good indeed, and quite in your way.”

“ I have seen the *Exposition* already,” he replied, drawing back his arm, “ and I am particularly engaged at present with this gentleman. I am going to see some diplomatic documents which.....”

“ Cannot we go with you ?” interrupted Lady Frances, pertinaciously, and triumphing in the evident perplexity of her husband.

The polite and inexhaustible courtesy of the young minister was instantly extended to the whole English party, to whom he was presented in form by the inexpressibly bored Sir Frederick. The honours were then done by the historical interests of the Palace of the Representatives of Belgium,—the monument of many changes. It was once the place of the Council of Brabant, then of the *États Généraux* ; and, in earlier days, it was the modest house in the Forest of Soignes, where Charles the Fifth retired immediately after the gorgeous ceremony of his abdication, to live in religious retreat, until he embarked for Spain.

In the official apartments of the minister of war were displayed for Sir Frederick’s inspection the treaties by which the five powers severally acknowledged the present independence of Belgium, and the sovereignty of its newly-elected king. The seal of each subscribing sovereign was enclosed in a gold or silver box of handsome workmanship ; and the documents were written on the fair pages of volumes so splendidly bound in crimson, scarlet, or purple

velvet, that they might have served for the albums of a modern fine lady, or the breviary of a royal saint of old.

A man's writing, it is said, may be taken as a fair indication of his character. That of William of England was the stout, plain round hand of the inditer of 'go it, Ned.' The signature of the Autocrat of all the Russias was dashed with such violence, that the pen had almost penetrated the paper, and the ink had spattered from the concluding flourish. It was obvious that the brother of the future Queen of Holland had recognized the sovereignty of the Belgian people, as a necessity, and not a choice.

"How very pretty!" said Mrs. St. Leger, looking only at the bindings of the volumes.

"Very," said Lady Frances: "I should so like to borrow one for a pattern for my book of butterflies."

"When they are done with, Monsieur," asked Mrs. St. Leger, (her head full of red-boxes, *démontés* diamonds, and other diplomatic perquisites,) "whom do you give them to? I should so like to have one—when they become useless."

"Do you mean that for an epigram, Mrs. St. Leger?" asked Lord Allington, while every one laughed.

"No, no," said Mrs. St. Leger; "they really would make such very nice *chiffonniers*; and I have seen such pretty things made at *our* Office, of the red boxes and other things, you know."

The conversation then took a gay and rather *spirituel* turn; supported principally by Lord Allington and the Secretary of State: while Lady Frances talked in a mutter to Lord Aubrey, and Mrs. St. Leger made eyes at the Belgian statesman. Sir Frederick Mottram alone appeared to take no interest in the conversation. He had seated himself at the table, and seemed deeply engaged in looking through the royal recognitions of the new and independent kingdom of Belgium. How many such treaties, formed at the will of the world's great (or little) masters, had been made, only to be scattered on the winds by the bursting hurricane of events, which no absolute will could control, and which no royal wisdom had foreseen! What now are the recognitions that placed William of Nassau on the Belgian throne! They are, what Mrs. St. Leger proposed making of those he gazed on—*chiffons*! It struck him that henceforth nations, not cabinets, would make recognitions; but what

would his ex-colleagues at home think of the reflection ?

Monsieur Nothomb was now obliged to return to the Chambers ; and the English fashionables agreed to walk through the Park to the *ancien Palais*, to see the exhibition of paintings. Sir Frederick Mottram, who had preserved the peevish look and tetchy manner of one annoyed in the extreme, was something surprised to find his arm suddenly interwoven in that of his wife's ; Mrs. St. Leger selected Lord Aubrey for her cavalier ; and Lord Montessor, breaking off from the party, joined the charming representative of *Sophie Arnaud*, whose exquisite personifications of the bon-ton of the days of the Henins and the Lauregais, had, on the night before, made more conquests than that of the English hereditary legislator.

The old Palace of Brussels, the residence of the Austrian and Spanish governors and ministers, and the site of many historical events, is now exclusively devoted to arts, sciences, and letters. It contains a cabinet of natural history, the Bibliothèques de Bourgogne, the national gallery of ancient masters, and the exhibition of the products of the modern school. There are also some objects of antiquarian interest lying neglected, and almost unknown, in one of the old mouldering chambers, formerly used as a dormitory for the ladies of the court. Among these, is the cradle of Charles the Fifth, in which he was rocked by imperial hands in his native city of Ghent. It is a somewhat clumsy crib, curiously carved ; and now, no longer draped with purple and gold, but covered with the produce of the spider's loom, and incrustated with the dust of centuries.

Beside it, on the floor, lie various pieces of the emperor's armour, finely chased and gilt, and of a massive weight ; while the palfrey ridden by the brave Infanta Isabella at the siege of Ostend, a small Spanish horse, appears almost alive. On the death of her favourite steed, it had been stuffed by the Princess's order ; and now, with the war-horse of Albert, shot in the fight, shares the fate of the relics of the immortal monarch of half the world.

Sir Frederick had already seen these various monuments of ancient times so little known ; and he had haunted the *Exposition* incessantly, intruding on the precious time of Monsieur Joly by endless questions concerning the arts, and making the acquaintance of many young and aspiring Belgian painters. He continued to lead them back to a subject on which they were not unwilling to dilate

—the elevation of Madame Marguerite to rank and wealth, her efforts to serve the arts, and the interest she was endeavouring to spread by her example and her eloquence. She had bespoken a cattle-piece of Verbrockhoven, views of the castles of Liége and Luxembourg of Bossuet, and an historical picture of the Four Days by Wappers.

It was singular, however, that in the haunts where it was so probable that the artist-Princess should frequent, she had not been seen : since her appearance in her own box at the theatre, she had not been met with in Brussels or its environs.

Sir Frederick had soon discovered that the self-involved English exclusives knew nothing beyond their own party, its amusements, or the deeper interests that occupied them ; and that the identity of the Princess of Schaffenhause with Madame Marguerite remained unsuspected by his wife, and might probably do so until her return to England,—an event which he had determined should be immediate.

During their arm-in-arm walk from the Park to the Place, Lady Frances was as strikingly gay and talkative, as her husband was grave and silent. She even ventured on bantering him on his Belgian flirtations ; adopted the hint of the *Béguine*, and adverted to the old story of Madame Marguerite, praying for grace in his eyes for her patroness the Princess ; and, half seriously, half tauntingly, reproaching him with having banished her from Brussels, by his barbarous reception of her civilities in her own box.

“ I think,” she said, “ her business to Namur (as her note of adieu calls it) is only a pretence to keep out of the way till you are gone. I see there is no use in contending with you, for it is *guerre à la mort*.”

“ Not on my part,” said Sir Frederick. “ But you may write to your friend, that I shall leave Brussels the day after to-morrow, when I desire that you may be ready to accompany me.”

“ Me !” said Lady Frances, with an involuntary start, and a compression of the arm she leaned on. “ I leave Georgina Montessor, in her present state ! You don’t expect that ?”

“ I am sick of this parade of sensibility,” he replied, petulantly ; “ sick of this grief *à la mode* ; of this dying to-day, and giving parties to-morrow ! Lady Montessor has her husband, her friend, and

her cousin Mrs. St. Leger, or her relation Lady Anastasia, to take your place at her sofa."

"She detests Lady Anastasia," said Lady Frances, almost suffocating with suppressed feelings; "never lets her inside the door, though she has almost forced it; and consigns her to *your* friends the Dogherties, with whom she is actually living at a public-house outside the Porte de Namur."

"*My* friends the Dogherties, as you please to call them, happen to be utter strangers," said Sir Frederick, "with whom chance has brought me into contact in the course of travelling: they are as much your friends as mine; for they pursued you with their vulgar familiarity, as they did me, till I peremptorily shook them off, with that obtrusive charlatan, Lady Montessor's new physician."

"The Dogherties *my* friends! they are no friends of mine, unless you admit them to be yours: at least, they are not *my* relations," said Lady Frances, forgetful of all the 'honours bright' pledged to the Princess.

"What does this silly and reiterated mystification mean?" said Sir Frederick, suddenly pulling up in uncontrolled provocation.

"It means *just that*," said Lady Frances, recovering her temper as her husband lost his—"It means that they are *not* my relations: and that they *are* yours."

"Do they say that?" asked Sir Frederick, so loudly as to extort from Lord Allington the observation that "there was a regular conjugal flare up."

"*It is said*," replied Lady Frances.

"By whom?" he asked.

"What does that signify?" she replied, lowering her voice and slackening her pace, that their conversation should not reach the party in advance. "What does it signify by whom such malicious and mortifying things are said? If they are true, one must submit to the humiliation, and keep as clear as we can of the subject;—you know, we have done so already with other relations: and if they are not true, we may laugh at the calumny."

"You must answer my question," said Sir Frederick, with a stern and peremptory emphasis. "If it is a mystification of Lord Allington's or the Montessors'—or if it is a dull invention of that

solemn, empty coxcomb, Lord Aubrey, I shall then know how to act; but if. . . .”

“ Oh! no, no; by ‘ those heavens that shine above!’ ” exclaimed Lady Frances, borrowing the words of a fashionable song, “ it is not so. The persons you have named have nothing to do with it; and be it true or false, I am as desirous to keep the fact from them as you can be.”

“ The fact!” he interrupted vehemently. “ Why, you are mad!”

“ Well, then, the story, the invention, the mystification—what you will. I would conceal everything of the kind from such men—men so extremely fastidious as,—as,—as—In short, Georgina Montessor alone has heard it breathed, and she has her reasons for not betraying a secret of mine.”

“ By all that’s sacred! you’ll drive *me* mad, if you are not so yourself,” exclaimed Sir Frederick, stopping short, as they entered the court of the old palace. “ What are you about?—what do you allude to! You do not mean,—I had almost said, you do not dare, to assert that the Dogherties are relations of mine? Why, his son was a helper in my stables, and then my groom—the servant who accompaneid me here.”

“ Yes, yes, I know it all,” said Lady Frances in an agony. “ He is your cousin: his rapid promotion created great surprise among our people. But, pray, don’t make a *scena* now: let us join our party. You see they are waiting for us under the archway. I beseech you!”

“ I will not move one step,” said Sir Frederick, stopping short, and turning full round, with his eyes fixed steadily on his wife, “ till you tell me who invented so absurd, so malicious, a story.”

“ Well, then,” she replied, with a propitiating look and manner, the tears swelling in her beautiful eyes, “ only don’t let them observe the ridicule of our position, and you shall know all.”

“ Well, well,” he said impatiently; and he turned his back on the party, with the air of observing the Gothic fragment of a princely tomb, which lies on the pavement of the court to the left of the entrance.

“ Why then,” muttered Lady Frances, dropping her head over the antique monument as if she knew or cared anything about any of the antiquities upon the earth or beneath it—“ it was” She paused.

“Who, who, who?” he vehemently repeated.

“The Princess of Schaffenhauseu,” she almost sobbed out, letting fall her veil over her face.

“Did *she* say this—the Princess of Schaffenhauseu?”

“Yes; she heard it all from Madame Marguerite, her *protégée*. Lady Mottram, your mother, was half-sister to this Sir—Odious Dogherty. She had gone on the stage, was thrown off by her family, and changed her name; but when she married your father, (being as much ashamed of her family then as they had before been of her,) she concealed from them her elevation. This Madame Marguerite is her niece, the daughter of Lady Mottram’s half-brother, an officer in the French service, and, of course, niece to Sir Ignatius Dogherty.”

This detail was made with a rapid utterance, but with an emphatic bitterness that proved the haughty victim of an interested *mésalliance* to have a secret triumph in the mortification she was inflicting. Sir Frederick affected to stoop his head over the monument, took out his handkerchief, as if to remove the dust which obscured the inscription, and then, when Lady Frances again took his arm, suffered her to lead him towards the *porte-cochère* of the palace. The party were sufficiently pre-occupied in obtaining admittance from the porte, not to have noted the continuance of the ‘conjugal set-to’ in the court: the hours of admission were over, the doors were closed, and *les lords Anglais* attached an importance to getting the *entrée*, which under other circumstances they would not have felt.

While disputing the point, and asserting that though the hour of opening was fixed, no hour for closing was announced, and that the public ought not to be disappointed, in a country where the public are everything, a young artist was descending the stairs which open into the porch. He immediately came forward, and, with a series of courteous bows, assured them that an exception would be made in favour of strangers. At his intercession, the whole party were admitted into the gallery.

The salon of the exhibition is a long, lofty, and noble apartment. In ordinary times its walls are covered with a collection of the ancient Flemish masters, of great antique curiosity and pictorial value; but on the occasion in question, these were covered by a temporary

skreen-work, on which the pictures of the modern artist were exposed. Although the gallery was closed for the day against the public, several artists of both sexes were still lingering before some of its finest paintings; or were seated in conversation on benches placed for the accommodation of the visitors.

“What a handsome gallery!” said Lord Allington, as the English party entered; “and it seems nobly filled too!”

“Yes, we are proud of our school; but among the most brilliant pictures of the present collection,” said the young cicerone, “we count the works sent to us from English artists.”

He pointed to the magnificent picture of the ‘Fall of Nineveh,’ by John Martin. The English party took the compliment as it was meant, and expressed their surprise at observing not only the work of an artist of whom the English nation is proud, but several charming landscapes by Constable, with sea-views, landscapes, and portraits by the Reinagles and other British artists.”

“Come,” said Lord Montessor, “this is liberal indeed!”

“It was at least a judicious idea of the directorial commission,” said a gentleman who had joined his friend the artist, “to unite in the same exhibition the productions of the several European schools. It prevented any tendency to exclusion or intrigue; and it afforded the opportunity for comparisons of manner, style, and conception, between the foreign and national masters, by which all may profit, even in preserving their own distinguishing characteristics.”

“The conception was generous,” said Lord Allington, the only one of the party who brought either taste or judgment to the discussion; “but I should suppose that a great impediment to its execution must have been found in the expense. These are not times in which painters, like your Rubens, can rival in their pecuniary liberalities the princes who affect to patronise them.”

“And therefore it was,” said Monsieur Campan (the gentleman who had joined and addressed the group), “that the *Commission Directrice*, in inviting the foreign artists to contribute to the exhibition, undertook to pay all the expenses of conveyance. Under the old system here, such a union of talent would have been impossible. Indeed, it was not then known at Paris, that we even had an exhibition.”

With a natural and national pride, the young artist and his friends then proceeded to point out the magnificent picture of the '*Troupeau effrayé par l'orage*,' by Verboeckhoven; the 'Christ in the Tomb,' by Wappers; the 'Christ restoring the Blind,' by Gallait; 'the Deluge,' by Matthieu; with the works of Delvaux, Van Brée, Ducorron, Shaepkins, Mademoiselle Kindt, etc. They were animated by an earnest desire to obtain for each the approbation of the foreign visitors, and to do the honours by the salon.

The party, however, soon broke up into smaller groups. Lady Frances had advanced towards a picture, followed by Lord Aubrey; who, however, instantly retreated, as if by command. Mrs. St. Leger stood before the picture of 'Eléonore and Rosamonde,' of Mademoiselle Fanny Corr, coquetting as she would have done before the high altar of St. Peter's. She had already collected around her a bevy of young artists, borrowed a catalogue from Lorenzo Zampieri, asked a question of Monsieur Madou, and furnished a subject both for the pen and pencil of Monsieur De Wasme. Like a true diplomatist, she had placed herself in relation with all within her sphere;—it is so easy for a pretty woman to attract, who gives herself the trouble to exhibit.

Sir Frederick Mottram stood before the fine statue of Count Felix de Merode, by Geef (of Ghent); himself, in pose and fixture of look, a living statue. The details communicated by his wife had made his thoughts a chaos. Thick-coming resolves were passing through his aching head; but his stern and inflexible countenance gave no indication of the war of feelings which were agitating his mind. Meantime, the young men, whose attentions were rendering the salon so amusing to the English party, pointed out some of the *notables* of the country who were present. Among these, was Henry de Brouckère, whose eloquent discourse in the Chamber, against the parsimony of the minister, and in favour of the claims of art, had induced the artists to purchase a picture out of the exhibition for the purpose of presenting it to him as an appropriate offering. Monsieur Coghen also was pointed out as a true patron of the arts: for he that pays a liberal price for good pictures is the best encourager of genius; and Monsienr C.'s recent purchase of Verhoeckhoven's beautiful work—which unites to the fidelity to nature of Paul Potter, the life, the spirit, and the picturesque ideality, the

highest departments of imaginative art—was a sufficient proof of his claim to the character.

Colonel Joly (the President of the *Commission Directrice*) and the Minister of the Interior were respectively named, as they passed together towards a picture in the distant part of the apartment. At the moment when the eyes of the English were turned towards them, they were returning the salute of a lady who had stopped before the ‘Christopher Columbus’ of Schaepekens, an extraordinary composition by an artist as yet scarcely ‘known to fame.’ The lady, though plainly dressed and deeply veiled, had something marked and original in her movement, air, and gestures,—a freedom, an ease and decision of step and attitude, which indicated the habit of self-reliance, equally removed from awkwardness and affectation. As she advanced, she attracted the attention of Lord Montessor.

“How well,” he said; “that woman steps out! How admirably she treads the boards, as we say behind the scenes. Look, Allington! *Est-ce une artiste, Monsieur?*”

“It is the Princess of Schaffenhhausen,” replied Monsieur Verberckt himself, (a true disciple of Benvenuto Cellini, whose works were among the more remarkable objects of the exhibition.) “She was an artist before her marriage, and well known as Madame Marguerite.”

“And she was more prized as Madame Marguerite,” said another artist, who was conversing with Monsieur Verberckt, “than she ever will be as Princess of Schaffenhhausen.”

“Madame Marguerite!” burst forth in simultaneous exclamation from the whole English party. But the Princess was now so close as to break off the farther observations, of which she was about to become the subject. She started back with an evident surprise and displeasure on recognizing her English friends, who instantly gathered round her, and placed their astonishment, which it was impossible to conceal, to the account of her sudden apparition.

“We thought you were at Namur!” was the general observation.”

“I only returned an hour back,” she said, “and took the opportunity of the gallery being closed against the public, to visit it *à tête reposée*. But you English have a *passe-partout*. Europe has no retreat from your curiosity. You ‘stop the chariot, and you board the barge,’ as your poet says, no matter who may be the passenger.”

She spoke with bitterness, and in good round English. The party she addressed smiled significantly; the foreigners drew back; Sir Frederick advanced a few steps, with a look of intense expression: the rooms became rapidly thinned; and, after a short pause, Lord Allington replied to the Princess's observation,

“Yes, we English are the Paul Pry's of the highways and byways of the whole world; and, ‘hoping we don't intrude,’ we thrust our stupid phizes into every one's privacy, from the harem of the Grand Signior, to the mysterious melody of the statue of Memnon; no matter what reasons the party intruded on may have to escape observation or elude discovery.”

“*Précisément,*” said the Princess, coolly: “and then, like the *badauds* of Paris, who turn out to *faire leurs farces*, as they term it, you always pay the forfeit of your own bungling curiosity, by getting into some dilemma, worse than that you hoped to discover. You are a most thinking people, *vous autres Anglais*; an excellent people; but you are the mere results of your own beef and pudding, the sublimitated distillations of your port and porter: and the same dogged, sturdy, perseverance that has placed you at the head of the plodding mechanists and calculating boys of Europe, disqualifies you for the *finesse* of social intrigue, and the *finoterie* of political combination. Solemn politicians, you are notoriously the *cavaliere paganti* of every cabinet. Great philosophers, you start at your own discoveries; and join the cry of the Sir Andrew Agnews against Locke and Hobbes, — you are ready to gulp down the mysticism of dreaming Germany, to study the unknown tongues of Irving, and to preach conservatism, when all around is changing and progressing. You fancy yourselves the Paul Pry's of Europe; you are but the George Dandins: and for the scrapes you get into, and the scrapes you are trying to get out of, the world will offer you no other consolation than ‘*Vous l'avez voulu, George Dandin — vous l'avez voulu!*’”

There was a dramatic vivacity in the delivery of this tirade, that would have placed the laugh of the auditors on the side of the Princess, had they not been themselves the subjects of the diatribe.

“These are strange observations,” said Lord Allington, “and new as strange, coming as they do from the ultra Princess of Schaffhausen. One would almost suppose they had been prompted

by Madame Marguerite, the fair artist whose representation of that revolutionary scene before the Hôtel-de-Ville bears testimony to her principles being anything but conservative."

"*En effet*," said the Princess, laughing, "they are Madame Marguerite's opinions. Wrong or right, they are honestly and frankly hers."

Here Lady Frances seized her arm with a compression so strong as induced her to draw the grasping hand through hers.

"But," she continued, "you none of you know Madame Marguerite; and yet she has long been desirous to make herself known to you. I have undertaken to present her to you all, when circumstances should favour the project; and (as I know you English celebrate all events by a good dinner, and love to discuss principles and pâtés, to enjoy soups and sensations at the same moment), suppose you all dine with me to-morrow, at my old *rendez-vous de chasse*, *La Groenendael*, in the Forest of Soignes."

"You may count upon me," said Lord Allington, half in love, and yet half in distrust of the Proteus Princess.

"And me, and me, and me!" said Lord Montessor, Lord Allington, Mrs. St. Leger, and Lady Frances.

"And Sir Frederick Mottram?" asked the Princess; "may I not count upon him?"

"Sir Frederick Mottram come into court," said Lord Allington, looking round. But Sir Frederick was gone. He was, in fact, rapidly walking to the farther end of the gallery, at the moment when his name was pronounced.

"*C'est égal*," said the Princess, gaily; "Lady Frances shall answer for him."

"I beg to decline the responsibility," said Lady Frances, sharply: "let those answer for him who have led him from his friends and party."

"Led him!" re-echoed the Princess; "no one has led him—circumstances alone have forced him; and they are a power which, *bon gré, mal gré*, force you all; a power which imperial despotism itself cannot mediatize."

"We had better go," said Lady Frances, impatiently; "they will certainly close the gallery."

"Which," said Lord Allington, "may never again contain so

many originals as at this moment. So, pray let us prolong the exhibition, till we study a little more the principal subject of by far the greatest original in the collection."

"At least," said the Princess, drawing forward a chair, "let her choose a favourable light for her *pose* : none but artists and coquettes know how much depends on that."

"None," said Mrs. St. Leger, with an impulsive *naïveté* that excited a general smile.

"And stage-managers," observed Lord Montessor.

Lord Aubrey sneered, and Lady Frances muttered—

"Stage-managers indeed—and manageresses too!"

"Then, here," said Lord Allington, throwing himself with an air of importance on a bench—"Here I take my seat as umpire."

The rest of the party followed his example, with looks of eager curiosity. The only attendant who remained in the gallery was busied covering some works at the farther extremity. The Princess seated herself in an arm-chair in front of the group, threw off her bonnet, and drew herself up in the attitude suited to the *pose* for an intellectual and poetical portrait of the highest order. The picture of Pope Giulio, by Raphael, was not more characteristic; nor that of Joanna of Naples by Leonardo da Vinci, more pictorial. Her drapery was black, her complexion pale, her eyes flashing; and the background of a sombre picture, before which she was accidentally placed, gave relief to her figure, that seemed to make a part of the composition, and to be cased in the rich gold frame surrounding it; while a bright full shower of light, falling on her head, completed such an original, as Vandyke would have delighted to copy, and as Rubens seems never to have encountered in a female form.

Every one was struck by the brilliant and extraordinary effect produced. There was a momentary pause. Lady Frances saw before her the concealed mistress of her husband, a person who had doubly made her a dupe. Lord Allington regarded her as a political intrigante, endowed with great beauty, and as much ability as he had ever 'coped withal.' Lord Aubrey thought she made Lady Frances look *fade*; and Mrs. St. Leger saw the heroine of a German romance, painted by a member of the romantic school; while Lord Montessor exclaimed—

"There is a *tableau*, if you will!"

“ Yes, *vivant*, ” said Lord Allington, looking with the closed eyes of a practised connoisseur.

But the eyes of Madame Schaffenhauseu were not idle ; they also seemed to read the countenances before her, (where not one high thought or noble passion had left its trace ; where all was conventionally cold, or affectedly languid,) with the stern contemptuous gaze of one who knew them well, and who

‘ — — did but for a while uphold
The unyoked humour of their idleness.’

“ Well, ” she said, (the curl upon her lip yielding to a smile more of pity than of complacency,) “ Well, will no one offer an opinion? The picture has been sufficiently submitted to your critical acumen to to obtain, at least, a decision on its authenticity. ”

“ Copy or original, it has obtained our unqualified admiration, ” said Lord Allington : “ but what we want to get at is, the *prima intenzione* of the artist. We see the effect produced, but know not the motive of the combination. ”

“ Nothing can be simpler, ” said the Princess, assuming a serious air, and an attitude of easy repose. “ The best combinations are ever the simplest. To drop figure, then, for fact, and to clear up your doubts (I will not call them suspicions), you all received me in London, under a delusion in which I had no part, as the elder Princess of Schaffenhauseu ; as the widow of one great diplomatist, and the daughter of another ; as a disciple of the school of Kaunitz, and an agent of that of Metternich ; as one whose illustration was that of forms and titles, whose genius lay in intrigue, and whose character, (shaded by vices which should have banished her from society,) was yet no greater impediment to her reception among the autocrats of London, than it had been in the aristocratic circles of Vienna. You were told that I had been false to one husband, and something worse to another : but you supposed me high-born, and you balanced my elevated rank against my despicable life. ”

A look of annoyance and a struggle to suppress risibility were variously depicted on the various faces of the auditors.

“ You do not expect that in courtesy we can reply to this charge, ”

said Lord Allington smiling. "We leave it to Doctor's Commons to decide upon equivocal ladies, and take all upon trust till the jury pronounces sentence."

"Yes, but the character of the woman for whom you took *me* was not equivocal; it was known to all Europe, and the jury of public opinion had long passed sentence of 'guilty' on it."

"Then, you are not the real Princess of Schaffenhhausen?" asked Mrs. St. Leger eagerly, "who is said to carry about a printing-press, and who . . ."

"Not *your* real Princess—not the Princess of whom you must have heard so much in the diplomatic circles of the little German courts. When application was made to some foreign ministers for letters of introduction for me to London society, the carelessness with which such letters are given produced a farcical mistake. The parties knew not, or at least thought not, of the Princess Albert de Schaffenhhausen, the *parvenu* whom the younger brother of the quondam minister had married a short time before his death, and with whom he had lived in retreat among the mountains of the Rhyngau.

"I was already deep in the honours paid to the supposed diplomatic celebrity before I was myself aware of the *qui pro quo*. That I should have availed myself of such a *prestige* in my favour, for a short time, was my humour, my whim—perhaps my philosophy. It answered purposes also which I had at heart to effect: it gave me the power to serve some, without doing injury to any. I was an artist let loose in a gallery of models; and I repaid my unconscious sitters in the coin they most appreciated. You all revelled in my salons, feasted at my table, and were pleased to benefit by the fashion you had yourselves conferred; and if some among you have not profited by my desire to serve you to the full extent of my wishes and exertions in your favour, it is not my fault." (She glanced at Lady Frances: after a pause she added,)

"You all intended to make use of me, that is quite certain; and my castle on the Rhine, like my house in London, was an item in your scheme of pleasure and amusement. That castle is literally a castle in the air—a ruin on a crag. But the house occupied by the Prince Albert and myself, like the rural residences of the other German nobility, is a plain square stone-house, with a blue slated roof,

in the midst of slovenly grounds and fine scenery. To this anti-romantic residence I had intended to have lured you all; and tagging a moral to my tale, to have sent you home, like the *dramatis personæ* in the last act of a play, *chacun avec sa chacune*; — husbands with their own wives, and bachelors with their own — egoism. For the rest, it matters little to you to know who I was before that accident which placed me on the same *grade* with yourselves.”

She paused and sighed.

“ Oh!” said Lady Frances feverishly, “ we have no right to pry, no right to inquire farther than”

“ No right,” interrupted Lord Allington; “ but it is impossible not to have an infinite deal of curiosity, and an ardent desire of knowing all that the Princess may please to tell, on a subject in which we all must feel deep interest and intense admiration.”

“ Exactly,” said Lord Montessor and Mrs. St. Leger. Lady Frances sullenly folded herself up in her cashmere, and Lord Aubrey took out his watch.

“ The rest is soon told,” she continued with simplicity. “ I am Irish by descent, Belgian by birth. My father was a soldier of fortune; my mother, an heroic Polonaise. Educated on charity, I have struggled through the flower of my youth for existence, honestly and diligently. I tried in England, and failed; in Belgium, and at least met with friends who appreciated, if they could not serve, me. I had relations wealthy and powerful; but they flung me off. As niece to the late Lady Mottram, I am cousin to Lady Frances’s husband; and this relationship, which has occasionally brought us into contact for the last few months, has been the cause of the idle stories put into circulation by the mischievous humour of Lord Alfred. Even Sir Frederick found his poor Irish cousin *de trop*; and the other relations I have, who pursued me as the Princess of Schaffenhhausen, had thrown me off as Madame Marguerite the portrait-painter.”

Everybody stared.

“ Your aristocratic, revolutionary Polish friends, I suppose?” asked Lord Aubrey sneeringly. Everybody looked at each other with suspicious archness, as if each thought the other might be the party alluded to.

“ No,” said Madame Schaffenhhausen; “ I have but two Polish

relations living ; a grandfather, an aged man, who has thrice refused to acknowledge the Russian despot, and has been thrice sent back to the dungeons of Warsaw ; and an uncle, who is now perishing slowly amidst the eternal snows of Siberia. The rest of my mother's kindred have been swept away by Russian bayonets."

A tear she endeavoured to suppress glistened for an instant in her eye ; but, as if ashamed of her weakness, she brushed it off, and added,

" Do not suppose I would profane a glorious cause by complaining here of a system to which all present are parties. The digression has been accidental. The other relations to whom I allude are known to you all ; have been honoured by that notice which is distinction — Lord Allington's ; and they are nearly connected with. . . . "

" It is time to go," said Lady Frances, rising : " we are keeping the gallery open. You see the man. . . . "

" A five-franc piece will settle that," said Lord Allington. " Pray go on, Princess ; I am prepared for any *dénouement*. Your tasteless, worthless relations are known to us all, you say?"

" To *all* ! " said the Princess, looking round significantly.

" Have *I* the honour, the high honour, of being so distinguished ? " said Lord Allington, with unaffected gravity. " I really should prefer. . . . "

" You ! " said the Princess, drawing up with a humorous expression of dignity—" *You* disdain me!—you, whose grandfather lived by his own labour, a city banker, or lawlord, or some such plebeian thing ! Talk of old blood in England ! the Red-book, there, is but an ennobled ledger : all now are lords of trade, like the forefather of Lady Frances's ducal sire, who kept a grocer's shop ; or Lord Aubrey's great granduncle, who was a linen-draper and mayor of London, in the time of William the Third. Oh, no ! the persons who despise my relationship as a blot in the escutcheon of true nobility, have royal blood in their veins ; they are the true conservatives, and represent the least changed of the primeval families of Europe—the Celts. They quarter arms with Abel, who, says an old heraldry book I have just picked up, ' bore his father's coat quartered with that of his mother Eve, she being an heiress. ' "

There was a general laugh, and a cry of " Name ! name ! " from Lords Allington and Montessor.

“ Sir Ignatius Dogherty ! ” replied the Princess, “ uncle to Sir Frederick and Lady Mottram, and to their poor relation, a quondam distressed gentlewoman, Madame Marguerite. ”

Lord Aubrey arose with a countenance lowering with impatience and disgust ; Lady Frances, in evidently deep and angry annoyance.

“ Princess ! ” said Lord Allington, taking her hand and kissing it respectfully, “ you are made to subdue those, whom you could not tame. I throw myself at your feet, the most devoted of your slaves and the most faithful of your allies. Accept at once my *palinodie* and my allegiance. ”

“ With all my heart ! ” she replied, laughingly. “ We wits need be true to each other, considering the numerical superiority of pretending dunces we must strive to make head against. But here come the officers of the house to clear the gallery.—My dear Lady Frances, fear nothing from your uncle of Dogherty, that sage, grave man. I have my *petit brin d’aristocratie*, like yourself. Ignorant vulgarity and unfeeling obtrusion are plebeian with me, all over the world ; and I am quite as desirous as you can possibly be, to keep clear of these descendants of the Princes of Inneshowen, for they are no less than that. Just now, however, there is nothing to fear ; our uncle is laid up, ‘ in durance vile ’ for a debt of his gentle-blooded friend, the husband of your noble relation Lady Anastasia ; and, if I do not liberate him myself, I suppose nobody else will. The Ladies Dogherty and Macanulty are gone off by the diligence for Cheltenham, to make trial of the generosity of a wealthy English friend, a certain Lady Dixon : the box, therefore, still remains unopened ; and if some Pandora, in the shape of an old Irish gossip or an Irish priest, (the usual depositaries of all Irish family secrets,) does not come forth with a Bramah key to open the patent lock, and let out mischiefs beyond the power of Hope at the bottom to remedy ; the hateful relationship need not go farther. But I thought it would amuse you all just to know it. ”

“ Yes, it’s very amusing, ” said Lord Allington, dryly.

Lady Frances neither understood the humour of her cousin’s speech, nor its causticity : she hurried sullenly on, with an air of offended dignity ; but the Princess followed her into the court, and, almost forcibly taking her arm under her own, insisted on drop-

ping her at the Bellevue, her own carriage being the only one in waiting.

Seated in the same little dark calash which a few weeks before had been lashed on the deck of the *treckschuyt* of Ostend, the two ladies drove off together. Lord Allington looked after them; and taking Lord Montessor's arm, while Mrs. St. Leger took that of Lord Aubrey, said, "That is one of the most extraordinary women of her time."

"So she is" said Lord Montessor. "What a fine stage figure too! What a Ballerina she would have made!"

"She is a regular adventuress," said Lord Aubrey.

"But very amusing," added Mrs. St. Leger. "And, oh! how she does dress!"

"There are two sorts of adventuresses," said Lord Allington, thoughtfully: "the one adventures out of obscurity, with honest and high intentions, seconded by great talents and bold conceptions; the other, with designs vague, unmeasured, and purely personal, relies only on a genius for intrigue, on a ductility of morals that bends to all occasions, and an hypocrisy that covers all defects. The Princess belongs to the first class, and is a rare example: you will find specimens of the second hanging about every old court and cabinet in Europe."

"Oh, you know what Lady D——says," observed Mrs. St. Leger; "that, with some beauty, no passions, and no principles, any woman may be anything she pleases."

"You may take her word for it," said Lord Allington.

"Did you observe Mottram," asked Lord Aubrey with more animation than usual, "hovering about, all the time of the Princess's exhibition? There is something very strange in his whole conduct."

"Very!" said Lord Montessor. "I am much mistaken if, under that serious, sentimental air of his, he has not given that worthy woman Lady Frances some cause of uneasiness."

"Oh! I assure you," said Mrs. St. Leger, "*elle est poussée à bout.*"

"I cannot understand that—when a woman is so handsome as Lady Frances, with one half the world at her feet, and the other half dying to be there."

Lord Aubrey smiled, and the conversation was interrupted by a rencontre with a party of English.

During the whole of a scene which had been pregnant with amusement to some, and of interest to all, Sir Frederick Mottram had continued to move about the gallery like an unquiet spirit. He had for a moment left it in uncontrollable agitation; but he again returned. Almost breathless with emotion and annoyance, he was without the will to depart, and yet without the wish to remain. Every feeling, every passion, every weakness of his nature was involved. Now catching, now losing a phrase, a word, or a name, he approached or retreated, as the interest of the Princess's relation deepened and touched him personally; until at length, he stood fixed, immovable, before the fine picture of Marguerite de Bourgogne.* The image of the historical heroine confounded itself with the voice and tones of her singular namesake. It was not till one of the officers of the exhibition politely informed him that it was impossible to keep the gallery open any longer, that he was roused to an actual conviction of the circumstance of his position; and having first given the impression of being an English amateur, his wild look and abrupt exit left the conviction that he was an English maniac.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Elopement.

“TO THE HON. MONTAGUE ST. LEGER, LONDON.

“Rue Ducale, Bruxelles.

“MY DEAR HARRY,—I scarcely know how to begin, or to tell you all that has happened. I cannot stop to use ciphers now, *par*

* By Monsieur Court.

exemple! What has occurred is really beyond beyond! What do you think! Lady Frances is gone off, *rien moins que cela!* But with whom? you'll never guess. Well, then, with Lord Aubrey. *Je n'en reviens pas.* There never was such an absurdity—so unnecessary a thing; as Lord A. says, so English. Here is the history, as well as I can for the present give you any idea of it. All was going on well here; Georgina Montessor better, quite in love with her hotel in the Rue Ducale, and a little so with her new Doctor, who turns out to be *tant soit peu* a saint, notwithstanding his flashy appearance. Old mother Medlicot had arrived too, and was upon active service; which gave us all an opportunity to amuse ourselves a little, and we went to the Belgian House of Commons. It was very entertaining; some of the young opposition really well-looking, with dark heads: Henry de Brouckère like Lord William Wentworth.

“They never took their eyes off our tribune. Such a love of a box! so different from the ventilator! Then, we went with one of the ministers to see the royal recognitions—very pretty. They'd make such dear albums! There we met Sir Frederick Mottram; and so bored a man you never beheld;—of which more hereafter. After that, we all walked across the Park to the exhibition of pictures: Lady F. all *gentillesse* to her *brutal*; which did not prevent their fighting all the same, like lord A.'s story about the Kilkenny cats. We heard such high words, as they walked after us! In the salon of the exhibition, we came on the Princess of Schaffhausen; and such a romance!—but that will keep: only she turns out not to be *the* Princess, *par excellence*, and only the woman we heard Prince Albert married, to spite somebody, I forget who. She is moreover a poor cousin of Sir Frederick's; and has been mystifying him, Lady F., and the rest of us *pour son bon plaisir*. But, what is most odd, she is that very identical Madame Marguerite whom Lord Albert *déterrait* as the supposed *friend* of Sir Frederick.

“Well, there was quite a scene in the gallery. The Princess told us all, and discovered that the ridiculous old Irishman, who made such fun for us in the Bellevue, is Lady Frances's uncle; and she put Lady F. into one of her fits of temper, which you know makes her beautiful face look like an Italian lake in a storm, as Lord A.

says. After all, however, the Princess carried her off in her carriage to her villa, (for her power over her is like magic.)

“ When we returned to the Rue Ducale, who should we find but Sir Frederick, pacing up and down the salon alone. You must know he was asked to dinner ; but nobody thought he'd come, because he scarcely ever calls, and has been away at Antwerp, seeing the ruins. While we were dressing, it seems, the Princess's chasseur brought a note to him, and her carriage, to bring him out to her villa, with an apology from Lady Frances for not returning to dinner ; which I read to Georgina Montessor, who took it in good part, and said something about St. Paul and Mrs. Medlicot. So we concluded that Madame Schaffenhausen was making up the whole affair ; which, after all, was the best thing could happen, as Lord Montessor said. Lord Aubrey was, as usual, *peu démonstratif*, and un-usually silent even for him ; and he left us after coffee, having gone for a moment to Georgina's room and found them at prayers, Mrs. Medlicot officiating. He only kissed her hand, as usual—you know his way.

“ Lady Frances returned in the evening, and was set down by Sir F. himself, who went on to the Hôtel de Flandres ; for there was no room for him here. I saw her for a moment, as I was going off to a ball given to the King and Queen. She looked very unhappy, and her eyes red with weeping. She said she was fatigued, but would tell me all another time. She bad me tell Georgina M. that a sort of a reconciliation had been patched up between her and her husband, by the Princess his cousin, and that she was to leave Brussels the following evening for England, to stay for a year at Mottram Hall ; but that she would rather go to her grave, and other heroics.

“ Well, as I was crossing the corridor about one in the morning, from Georgina's room, I met little Hypolite the page with a note in his hand, which he thrust into his bosom when he saw me. It struck me at the time as very odd. The next day, about twelve o'clock, we were at breakfast. Lord Aubrey never breakfasts with us, and Lady F. rarely ; so their absence created no surprise. But Allington, who had sat up all night with an English party at play, said that Lady Frances had been unusually early in her walk. (Ever since our return, she has walked before breakfast in the

Park, a thing the most extraordinary for her.) After breakfast we were all to go to the Botanical Garden; but no Lady Frances appeared. Then, you know, came inquiries, and the whole thing came out. She was off with Lord Aubrey, her maid and page accompanying her.

“ They have taken the road to Aix-la-Chapelle, and Sir Frederick has followed them; so there will be a duel; but neither of these men will stir to prevent it, which is very selfish. What will Claude Campbell say? Will he sing now ‘*J’avais une marraine; que mon cœur, que mon cœur a de peine!*’ The most extraordinary thing of all is, that Lady Montessor, who, you would think, must die of a broken heart at this double treachery, has heard it with a resignation quite miraculous. She sent me immediately to the Pavilion at Groenendael, to hear what the Princess would say; but she had left the night before, nobody knows for where.

“ It strikes me that Georgina is not sorry to get rid of Lord Aubrey, even at her friend’s expense. Since he had grown weary of being the *souffre-douleur en permanence*, he said such very bitter things, and something so very disrespectful about St. Paul, who kept company, he says, with a coppersmith, and was no example for a gentleman. Though nobody can be more proper than Lord A., nor more regular at church. Besides, Dr. de Burgo is much more amusing.

“ The delay in your appointment is monstrously provoking. Everybody says, if you are appointed to Hummenburg instead of Sweden, you ought to insist on having Claude Campbell your secretary—a small compensation. At all events, I shall stay quietly here till you come over. Ask Claude for the drawing of Lady M.’s funeral procession; it was so very nice. I am happy to say, she will have no immediate occasion for it. She drove out to-day. Lords Montessor and Allington leave this for London in a few days. Lady M. does not move till after Christmas.

“ There are such nice Poles here, you have no idea! such divine musicians. I wish the Emperor would forgive them all, and take them into favour. They do so dance the mazurka! quite perfection! The ball last night was magnificent: rather mixed to be sure—seven hundred people! But, oh! the music! The Queen danced all night; such a sweet toilet, so simple! Leopold is grown fat,

and is as handsome as ever. He remembered, and chatted, with me, just as in Malbro' House. There is not a word of truth in all you have read in the papers; they are the happiest of the happy. I am quite in love with Brussels now. But I must stop. Send me the 'Age,' the 'Court Journal,' all the papers that mention the elopement. What a sensation it *will* make! Kiss dear grand-mamma for me.

"Yours affectionately,

"FANNY ST. LEGER.

"P. S. That odious Lady Anastasia is at last gone away, with her Irish friend, Lady Dogherty. The poor old beast that made us all laugh so is in gaol. And what do you think! Lord Alfred went off from the races indebted to every one, even to old Dogherty's son (*un enfant d'amour*), who kept an hotel here.—Did you ever!!—Dr. de B. told me this in confidence, and in a manner *à mourir de rire*. He has told us also a conversation of Lady Frances's about Lady Montessor, that would render it impossible that the 'inseparables' could ever speak again, even if that poor lost creature had not taken the step she has done. But the Doctor hates the Mottrams, and calls him 'The Don.'

"F. ST. L."

Letter II.

"TO THE HON. MONTAGUE ST. LEGER, LONDON.

"Rue Ducale.

"MY DEAR HARRY,—Just as I had despatched my letter by the embassy, an express arrived from Namur to Dr. de Burgo. Sir Frederick overtook the fugitives between Namur and Huy: a duel ensued, and Lord Aubrey is mortally wounded; so Dr. de Burgo thinks, by the statement of the Belgian surgeon; still *he* does not despair of saving him, and has started for Huy. Georgina was half inclined not to let the Doctor go; but he was already off, and rode Lord Montessor's Taglioni. Mrs. Medlicot is going to put up prayers for his recovery, (that is, Lord A.'s) in the Protestant church. His dying in sin would be awful! *Au reste*, she thinks it a lucky event, as a step

towards reformation, if he will but improve it. She has given me a book *où il y a de quoi penser*, really. I believe we are all worse than we are aware of. To think of Lady Frances, so rich, so admired! To be sure, it does make one reflect:—what a change for her, next winter! But then, carrying off Lord A. and mounting his head to such a step, *was* a triumph few women could resist.

“ I was asked to dine at the King’s, but could not leave Georgina, now she is so completely alone; for the two peers are gone to Paris. How provoking! I am *triste comme un bonnet de nuit*; so, for God’s sake hurry your departure. I won’t close this till to-morrow’s post arrives.

“ P. S. A most amusing letter from Dr. de Burgo. Lord A. is really mortally wounded in the shoulder. The Doctor extracted the ball in a most extraordinary manner, with an instrument he made at the moment, with an old pair of scissors and some harpsicord wire, he found in the room; so he hopes he may not die. He quite astonished the Belgian surgeons, and thinks them great blockheads not to see Lord A.’s danger; for they insist upon it there was no difficulty in the case.

“ The Doctor had a long interview with Lady Frances, at a little auberge at Huy: never was such a *scena*; her hair dishevelled, and in a white *peignoir*. She put him in mind of Miss O’Neil, etc. etc.; Sir Frederick did not leave Huy till Doctor de B. arrived; but he would not see Lady F. The Doctor has been negotiating with all parties, but to no purpose; so there must be a divorce. Georgina thinks Lord A. must marry her; and means to preach him into it: *c’est unique!* Sir Frederick will I suspect marry the Princess of Schaffhausen. She is so very rich, be she who she may.

“ You will have all in the English papers before you get this. The duel, and its cause, have appeared in the ‘*Éclaireur*’ of Namur, and in the ‘*Liberal*’ and the ‘*Independent*’ here. The liberty of the press is frightful. They are quite right in Austria and Prussia!

“ Tell Madame Devy to send me a *douillette*, on my old pattern,—black *gros de Naples*, *doublée*, *bleu foncé*; and a travelling *capote*, to match. What do people in England say of things here? I know you think that *cela ne tiendra pas*; but things go on so quietly, you have no idea. The King and Queen drive about without guards or any state whatever. He looks so happy, and she dresses

so very well—quite *à ravir*. In short I am beginning to give up old Sir Francis Wronghead, as Lord Allington calls the Dutch King. Yet, if I was sure it would not offend *here*, I would drive to the Hague, to see the Prince and Princess of Orange. He is such a delight; and she, a *véritable grande Princesse*. I often wish everything was left to La *Diète* at Frankfort.

“*A propos* : the dear little *Comtesse* has written to me from Deux-Ponts. She says things there are beyond beyond : worse than at Nassau and Hesse Darmstadt. *Les jeunes gens* all infected. The King of Bavaria has forbid them from travelling in France, or in Belgium and Switzerland : ‘*Notre excellent roi,*’ she says, ‘*redoute notre contact avec l’esprit républicain ;*’ and she adds, ‘you cannot conceive with what difficulty my brother obtained a passport for your republican country. It requires more than high recommendations to remove the interdict.’

“I really think Georgina is better since the *esclandre*. She says, she always suspected Frances Mottram would come to that. She was witness to the pains taken by the Princess to make her observe *les bienséances*, but it wouldn’t do. What do you think of Lord Alfred and Count Katzenellenbogen being *aux petits soins*, at Paris, *auprès de Madame Christophe* the black Empress !

“The Princess, the papers say, is living in great privacy at her chateau in the Ardennes. Was there ever so enviable a woman ?

“Adieu ! F. ST. L.”

Letter

“TO CORNELIUS MACDERMOT, ESQ. SHANBALLYMAC, KERRY,
IRELAND.

“New Gaol, Brussels.

“THE divel set his foot after me, the first step ever I made on the Dublin road of Shanballymac; for luck nor grace never attended me from that cursed hour to this. And better for me to have staid on the right side of the Shannon, and cut sods or picked pitaties, before I went trapesing about the world at my time of life, goster-

ing after the quality here, and foostering after outlandish places and people there; spending my hard thirty year's earnings everywhere: and for what? I'll be afther asking you, Cornelius Macdermot. Why, then, for nothing at all but intire ruin to me and mine—neither profit nor pleasure, but the money running off like a mountain-straim after an hard day's rain: and to find myself shut up like a wild baste in a cage at a fair, in a furrain jail; for it's there where I am at this prisent writing, sorrow elsewhere; far away from kith, kin, and relations. Them that's nearest and dearest to me are gone, like the rest; and it's what, if you don't make a last gathering for me, though you driv Terence Kelly's cattle for it, and sould every baste and hedge-stake on the farm of Shanballymac house, I am a dead man, and a prisoner for life.

“Och! Macdermot, Macdermot, it isn't with a dry eye you'll read, or I write this: but let nothing tempt you to that murther of the world, becoming an absentee. Take warning by my fate; and believe me, Mac dear, that if oncet it's my great luck to set foot again on the green sod of ould Ireland, if Saint Peter himself opened the gate of paradise, and said, 'Walk in, if you plaze, Sir Ignatius Dogherty, and take an air of the place,' I'd look twice before I'd lose sight of Mangerton mountain. I declare to Jasus, my dear frind, I am so moidered, and bother'd, and bediveled, that though I have a power to tell you, and nothing to do but tell it, (for I'm all alone by myself from morning till night, and not understanding a word that is said to me, by them that is about me, good nor bad, no more than if it was Greek,) still my heart and my eyes are so full, that I can't get out a syllable: and don't know where I left off, nor where to begin. And I wish that, instead of sending my last by th'embassador's bag, I had bagged off myself: but there's no use in talking now.

“Well, sir, just as we were all getting a little pace and quiet at the German spaw, that I tould you of—but I forget all thim furrain names—thedivel be in my Lady and her streel of a frind Lady Anny Statius, but they must be off to Aches-le-Chapel, because thim great people got tired of the other place; and my Lady Dogherty declared to God, and upon her honour, that she'd lose her last lung if she lost sight of the Doctor. But what do you think, sir? that raal scamp and Rabrah, if there's one on the face of God's creation,

Mr. W. W. Macanulty borrowed my ilegant thravelling carridge that cost me three hundred pounds before it left Mr. Hutton's yard in Dublin, to go, as he tould me, to Frankfort (a morning's drive, sir,) to fetch his own new bespoke galash : but from that day to this, I never set eyes on Mr. W. W. Macanulty, nor my thravelling carridge either ; and though Lady Anny Statius and my Lady made belief he had gone on before us, and cut across the river Rine, to secure invitations from his ould frind the King, for the fates, the divel a word of thruth was there in the whole fiction ; so, when we had to start, it was an hired galash we were obliged to take : and I had the greatest mind to pitch the ould she-dragon to the divel, and lave her to her great relations, only Lady D. persuaded me that she was to get me an order for a star and ribbon from King Leopold : for you're nothing at all at all at them furrain German coorts, if your're not hung over in gewgaws and scraps of ribbons, like a pedlar's box on a market-day. You might be the Duke of Leinster here, and nobody would care a pin about you, if you hadn't a scrap of blue at one button-hole, and a rag of red at another ; and a donny cross on one side, and a star as big as a pewther plate on the other. And I wouldn't be after throubling you with all this bladerumskite, only by way of giving you some rational raisin for my great foolishness.

“ Well, sir, owing to some mistake of the Docthor, in the map he made for us of the road, we' missed the great people, till we came in sight of Brussels city ; when the first thing we saw, outside the gates of the town, sir, was a hotel or inn, that, if I had my desire to be King of Brussels, or of that inn, it's the last I'd chuse. It's little you'd think of the Kilmaine Arms, or the ould Stag's Horns, if oncet you see the Hotel d'Ireland, with an intire new golden harp, and ‘ Caed mille faltra, ’ over the *corte pochère* as they call the hall-doors here. But I need not tell you whose it is, poor lad ! The moment I came within sight of it, and I choaking alive with the thirst, and my throat as full of dust as the Dunleary road, that was dry the day after the deluge, out I slithered, sir, and the first thing I heard was ould Kit Fitzpatrick's fiddle singing out, and th' ould song,

‘ Why don't you sell your fiddle,
And buy your wife a gownd ? ’

—you know yourself. And ‘What does ye plaze to have?’ says a comely cratur in the bar, and in as good English as I am spaking to you at this prisent moment; and then a hullaballoo, sir, and a ‘*mille murthur*’; and before I knew where I was, who should be hanging round my neck but Betty Burke! For, what would you have of it, sir, but Larry, the cratur who has more heart in his little finger, than all that ungrateful Docthor has in his whole carcass, wrote for his poor mother to come and keep house for him, and see that he was not plundered intirely by them furrain thieves; and so, two days before I got back from the river Rine, Mrs. Burke and Kit Fitzpatrick arrived by steam from Shannon river into the port of Antwerp, close by to Brussels, booking themselves at Limerick; and they coming in not a hair turned, and fresh as four year olds, as I was tould. Well, sir, Larry was just returned from the race-coorse. after winning every bet he made; and when he and I and Mrs. Burke set down to boiled fowl and bacon and greens, a pot of ale and a tumbler of hot, and Kit playing up th’ould song, divel a bit I’d have taken my bible oath that it was in ould Ireland we were oncet again, in the little room behind the bar in the Stag’s Horns.

“And so, laving the ladies to streel after the great people and go to coort, and so forth, I settled down quiet and aisy at the Irish hotel; and was very useful, keeping all together, and looking to the till, and one little turn and another, while Larry was running his colt, and betting with the best in the land, and winning lashings of money; and Betty Burke worth her weight in gold in looking after the larder; only the cratur had her ould failing—you know yourself—and kept looking at the people drinking, and took the Faro and the Lambick like mother’s milk. And the house as full as it could hould—like a rookery, sir, with the first Irish families on the road, (and maybe there wasn’t oceans of them.) We had Counsellor and Miss Rafferty *oh premieyere*, as they call it, which manes in the first flure; and their daughter and son-in-law, Major, and Mrs. Major Driscoll, of the Heavies, H.P. And there was Mrs. Widow Murtagh O’Sullivan, of Goosegreen, county Cork, and three lively fine girls her daughters, that gave tay-parties and hot suppers to the young officers of the Guard here; and two of the Reilys from Tiprary. But the Raffaties went for a day to see the battle of Watherloo, and never returned, so that we had to send their account

to their agent in Cork ; and Mrs. and Miss O'Sullivan's went to see the ruins of Antwerp ;—and, to make a short story of it, divel a pay they paid, till it brought ruin upon us all : my poor Larry having been traisted mighty ill by a young Lord, after whom he is now gone to Paris to get back his property. And then, down comes all the tradesmen for furnishing the hotel, and for carving and gilding the harp. But, the cormorants ! I cannot tell you the set of dirty blackguards they are, giving no credit, like as in Ireland, for a year and a day, and having a little indulgence after : and it's all for ready money they work, says they, the dirty spalpeens ! So they distrained the goods, and sould all in the premises—divel a screed they left, not as much as a feather-bed for poor Betty to die upon : for the Faro, sir, was the death of her. Her stomach couldn't bear it, after th' innocent mountain dew she was accustomed to from her cradle, the cratur ; it sat upon her like a wet blanket, and was her death.

“ And, och ! Macdermot, the things she tould me with her dying breath, and in the prisence of her priest, that is Father Macgillicuddy, of the county Cork in Ireland, but now cojutor in the Irish Ladies Convent at Bruges, and preacher to the *Béguines*, a sort of Sisters of Charity, like our Cork Ladies, in Belgium. And, sir, I'm bound on the cross, and the Holy Evangelist not to let a word pass the threshold of my lips for one year and a day ; and then Father Mac is to absolve me, and the world will know who and what I am. And it's little the Kearneys of Fort Kearney, and Lady Anny Statius, or that *storkna voragagh*,* Lady Dixon, that is for all the world like a lane horse looking over a gate, thinks who I am ; and, pace to the sowl of my sister Honoria Dogherty, alias Lady—it matters not who ; and also Fineas her brother, who died fighting for his king and country with *Boney* in Germany. But it will all come out, sooner or later, if I live to get back.

“ And there is a great Princess in the secret, and Father Mac her director, and a Mamber of Parliament ; and Nature's above art ; as my best baby-linen-warehouse shirt would tell, if it could spake. And it's a wonder, you'll say, but a man that's under the greatest of compliments to me and mine, as Sir Frederick Mottram surely was, wouldn't come and bail me off. But here comes the thing that

* A tall gawky :—literally, the stake in the market-place.

bates Bannaghar ! If I am between four walls this day, it isn't for my own filandering and gallantry, as in the ould times, when myself and the high sheriff were locked into jail together, but for a blackguard that I knew nothing about ; and went surety, at my Lady's request, for Mr. W. W. Macanulty : just a matter of form, says he, (a pretty form, that claps a man into jail for life,) besides lending him two hundred pounds, and his i, o, u, for his tailor's bill ; being palavered out of my substance by Lady D., and her orders, and ribbons, and crosses ; and the divel a cross of my money I ever seed, and had nothing but crosses, and plenty of that same, ever since.

“ Well, sir, after waiting a day or two for poor Larry's return and Mr. Mac's arrival, I bethought me of my frind that wore my best shirt for a week and more, and I wrote him a civil note, and sent it to his hotel. Sorrow taste of an answer he sent, except, as I could make out their gibberish here, that his wife had run away with another gentleman, and that he had run after her. And then I wrote to the Docthor, the unnatural blackguard ! and to this day believes him to be the real and undoubted son of sporting Jimmy Burke, and that I had neither act nor part in. And proof is, that my mind niver once misgave me about him, all the time he was my travelling Physician ! not all as one as Larry, with his mother's roguish eye ! But of that *more in a year and a day*, sir. And what was the answer ? Why, that when I had paid him what I owed him of his salary, he would have no more communication with me, at all, at all ! for that my low habits and bad company obligated him to cut the connexion ! His own words, the villian of the world, och murthur ! And if you knew all, as one day you will, a fellow I found flourishing about the streets of Brighton, with a pair of odd boots and a threadbare surtout.

“ So, sir, all my fine quality frinds left me to die here : if it wasn't for the excellent jail allowance, (for I'll say that of them Belgians, that they understand raal good living, and give plenty of it,) I'd been starved alive. But my heart is broke, Macdermot dear, and my appetite gone. I never recovered that stinking ould tan-pit they put me into at the German spaw ; and I'm as blue as a blanket after it to this day ; and except a taste of Faro, which the jailor gave me (a mighty genteel sort of man, and has a little English, and puts me in

mind of Phadrig Flaherty) I'd have been dead in a furrain land long since, and not a frind to close my eyes. And at this moment there is a weight on my heart, that it's with the greatest of difficulties I hold the pen. Och musha, musha! With which, being your ould frind till death, I remain ever, my dear Macdermot, hoping an early remittance, if the last heifer on the land is put up to sale for it, who is ever

“Your most affectionate frind,

“IGNATIUS DOGHERTY.”

“P.S. Och! blood and thunder, here's news! The great Princess that I often mentioned to you, and that we kept skelping after from Ostend to the world's end, and would never so much as look at my Lady, has sent her home d'affair, as he calls himself, to pay my debts, and a fifty-pound note to pay my way back to ould Ireland. I've no time to say more, for I'm going to sail by the canal to Antwerp, and so straight across to the Shannon home; laving a note to Larry to follow with a frind of his, and my curse on the Docthor on my dying bed, if I was on it. And have had lave from the Princess (a fine cra-tur!) and Father Mac to write to the Doctor, and tell him who he turns out to be—little Rory Burke, who passed for my natural twin-son, and was chosen, for some bumps on his head, by the dispensary pottecary to be his prentice; and when I get back to Shanballymac has lave to write the same to the Marchioness, his new greet frind, and as greet a scamp as himself, if it's all true Lady Macanulty tould my wife, of her goings on. But no more at prisent. It's with the greatest of joy I tell you that I shall be my own postman, and will be after delivering you this at your own door; and I'll ingage it's not by Brighton I'll return, that set us all scattering over the world like a flock of wild geese on a common; for it's there, that divel of a Docthor—Lord pardon me for saying so of my own son! (if it's my son he is,) first driv it into my Lady's head that she had lost that lung of hers, and would never find it till she went up the Rine and tried the German spaws! Well, it's folly to grieve, Corney honey, but ye may tell them all at Shanballymac, that if iver they catch me in the charackter of a 'Pilgrim of the Rine,' I'll give thim lave to hang me up for a scarecrow in my own poraty field; and that I'm

free to confess it's rightly served I am for turning up in my ould age an Irish absentee. And so farewell till we meet.

“ I am affectionately yours,

“ IGNATIUS DOGHERTY. ”

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

TOWARDS the commencement of the winter of 1834, the British emigration of the autumn of 1833 had winged their way back to their own first, best country, which, in spite of its boasted supremacy over all other countries of the earth, sends forth more *ennuiés* in search of sensations than any other nation of the known world. The London papers teemed with arrivals of the noble and the wealthy, from ‘ a tour on the Continent,’ at their unrivalled seats in the country, or, *en passant*, at their splendid mansions or fashionable hotels in the capital, British heiresses returned the wives of foreign pauper Princes ; young fortune-hunters come back the husbands of well-jointed dowagers : some too, arrived who had left their wives behind them ; others, accompanied by the wives of their friends.

Under the latter category, Lord Viscount Aubrey was gazetted as arrived at his mansion in Belgrave-place, where he was received by his *tout-tout* Colonel Winterbottom, whose councils with house-keepers and tradesmen had prepared a commodious and luxurious residence for its future frail mistress, one of the model-mansions *à la Louise Quatorze* of the new West-end.

There was something in the unwonted boldness of this step, which violated all the decencies of vice, extremely consonant to the feeble, petulant, and inconsequent character of Lady Frances Mottram, and to the *laissez aller* insensibility of her noble paramour ; whose vanity, flattered by the devotedness of the reckless mistress, took no

cognizance of the deeper shame it would throw round the character of the future wife.

The Marchioness of Montessor's arrival 'at her Ladyship's mansion in Arlington-street, under the care of Doctor de Burgo, the confidential medical attendant of the noble family,' glittered in every journal; and was followed by a succession of 'we-regrets' and 'we-are-happy-to-announces,' according to the frequent variations of her Ladyship's health. The eye, if not the mind of the public, was kept on the stretch of expectation for her Ladyship's recovery or her Ladyship's death; events concerning which the public (her tradesmen excepted) were equally indifferent, and equally curious. Not so, however, the journalists and chroniclers of fashion. Sentiment, eloquence, scandal poetic and prose, were pressed into the service of the last days of Georgina Marchioness of Montessor. Every bulletin delivered by the porter of Montessor-house was the text of a commentary, of an *éloge* on the virtues of the dying lady, or the skill of her excellent physician; of her Ladyship's resignation, Christian fortitude, and angelic patience; of the Doctor's unceasing vigilance, profound skill, and miraculous resources. The scenes of the death chamber, too, were narrated with dramatic effect. The solemn leave-taking of the 'afflicted and noble husband,' her last interview and parting admonition to 'her friend' Lord Aubrey, and the edifying influence of Mrs. Medlicot, and of the evangelical Kitty Cochrane, the Irish saint, were eloquently displayed.

At length, the last act came; and the Queen of Almack's, the leader of a political coterie, the newlight penitent of Mrs. Medlicot, and the illustrious patient of Dr. de Burgo, died, like a French lady of the old court of Versailles, supported by her husband and her quondam-lover, wept over by his friend and rival, and in the midst of relations, admirers, and devotees. The 'Court Journal' announced the 'melancholy intelligence' with a mourning margin an inch deep; and half the other journals of the empire reiterated the astounding fact, that the Marchioness of Montessor, notwithstanding her rank, wealth, and 'all of grace and virtue that dignified humanity,' had paid the great debt of nature, like the most ordinary of mortals. Half the noble families of the empire went into mourning; and her disconsolate husband went—into the country, to join a *partie de chasse* at Belvoir.

Brighton and Shanballymac, meantime, had received back their complement of the 'pilgrims of the Rhine;' and hundreds of future tours to 'the beautiful and abounding river' and its 'castled craigs,' were already in preparation, to delight the world, and hold forth the bright examples of political wisdom, which preside over the beautiful scenes and happy peasantry of the Rhingau. Among the earliest announced was 'A Summer's Wanderings through Belgium to the Rhine,' by Catherine Lady Dogherty, dedicated by permission to her friend the Right Honourable Lady Anastasia Mekanulty, and edited by Lauraphemia Lady Dixon.

Lady Dogherty, herself preferring a sentimental dependance on the wealthy widow Dixon in Cheltenham, to the rude exile of a residence at Shanballymac, had accepted the promise of a separate maintenance from Sir Ignatius, as soon as his embarrassed affairs could be reduced to order by his friend and confidential adviser and attorney-at-law, Mr. Cornelius Macdermot; a consummation so devoutly to be wished, and so difficult to attain in Ireland.

Whatever picturesque, romantic, statistical, social, moral, or political impressions, Belgium, its revolution, government, society, scenery, etc. had left on the mind and registered on the journal of Lady Dogherty, during her residence at the Bellevue; and whatever incidents or reflections, feudal, metaphysical, and mystic, Germany had afforded her, during her passage up and down the Rhine, her drive to Beiberick, or her *séjour* at Baden—those of Sir Ignatius were of a different and darker character.

A few drunken bouts with his beloved son Larry, at a Kermess, or in the Hôtel d'Irlande, with Betty Burke and Kit Fitzpatrick, excepted, the whole of *his* tour had been a series of privations, mortifications, and tribulations. The unrepaid sums lent to young Mr. Macanulty, who had gone Consul to Algiers through his lady's interest, with the still larger sums expended at the instigation of Doctor de Burgo, in show and making a figure, and the money lavished in setting up the Hôtel d'Irlande, and establishing Larry as a sporting gentleman at Montplaisir, had reduced the Baronets's moderate property to one-half of its original amount. His absence from home, the consequent non-payment of rents, the dilapidations of his property, with the breaking down of the Shanballymac Provincial Bank, and the blowing-up of a mining speculation on the Shannon,

gave the *coup de grâce* to a fortune, which his former successes as a popular Irish innkeeper and land-jobber had so slowly and laboriously raised.

After a year's residence from home, varied as the locomotive tendencies of the ladies Dogherty and Dixon directed, Sir Ignatius found himself, one November evening seated in the window of the front parlour of Shanballymac-house from which a legal execution had conveyed the furniture; "the people about the place" (to use his own words) "had taken as many of the moveable fixtures as they could lay their hands on, th' ungrateful bastes!"

Sir Ignatius had drained the last drop from his tumbler, and shaken the last dust from his German pipe (the sole relic of his disastrous pilgrimage). He looked at the sun as it set behind the mountains, and then on the Shannon which rolled majestically by, and he thought of the money he had left on the shores of another river. He thought of Ostend, and the Doctor's *rigmarol*, which had first turned the head of Lady Dogherty. He thought of Brussels, and all its 'moving accidents;' of his arrest at the theatre, his bills at the Bellevue, and his confinement in the debtor's gaol. He thought of his tiresome tour on the Rhine; of his being dyed blue in the baths of Baden, and pinched black by Lady Dogherty's admonitory fingers everywhere; and he finally thought, that if all these melancholy reminiscences would turn out but 'an unaisy dhrame,' what fun alive it would be to awaken and find himself rid of Miss Kitty Kearney, of Fort Kearney, and once more seated by a rousing turf-fire in the old bar-room at the Stag's Horns, singing

"Why don't you sell your fiddle,"

to the obligato accompaniment of Kit's instrument, and with Larry bearing a chorus, and some of his old gossips and cronies playing audience.

Whoever may feel an interest in the fortunes of Sir Ignatius Dogherty, representative of the Princes of Ineshowen, if their love of the picturesque should carry them to the Lakes of Killarney as it led them to the Rhingau in 1855, may turn a little out of the direct high-road to Kerry, and behold at the four cross-roads of Shanballymac a square, white-walled, blue-slatted-house, with a flaunting

sign, bearing a noble pair of antlers, and the inscription of "NEW STAG'S HORNS, BY LAWRENCE FEGAN DOGHERTY," where they will find the spirit of Sir Ignatius's dream fully accomplished.

The arrival of Larry Fegan, his son 'and darling without end,' a few weeks after his own return to Ireland, had bound up 'every corporal faculty' of the Baronet to the point he had long contemplated, of returning to his old vocation. He expended the fragments of his fortune and credit, therefore, in fitting up the as yet unfinished Shanballymac-house as an inn, and in furnishing it in a handsome style. The announcing the new establishment in all the Munster papers, the settling Larry as its master, Kit Fitzpatrick as its resident bard, and Mr. Macdermot as its honoured and permanent guest, was a work as rapidly executed as conceived: for, unable to lay aside his newly acquired dignities, Sir Ignatius conciliated his tastes and habits with his family pride, by becoming a sleeping partner only in the house.

While Lawrence's name, therefore, figured on the sign, and his handsome person on the Kerry race-ground, bringing custom to the shop by his sporting accomplishments and popular qualifications, Sir Ignatius looked to the business *en amateur*, — sat on a stone bench at the door, had a word and a joke for every guest, and a welcome for every passenger; and having made 'over a bit of land' to his lady, for the payment of her separate maintenance, on condition that he was never to hear a word more from her, 'good or bad,' for the rest of her life, he soon forgot the disastrous consequences of his temporary gentility, and taste for picturesque travelling. Be it hoped, therefore, that the worthy Baronet is destined to pass the remainder of his days on his own terms, indulging in his 'sup of hot,' and singing *Shan-van-vough* to the delight of the tap-room of the Stag's Horns. Larry, meanwhile, talks openly of 'my father Sir Ignatius;' and sinking his former stations of tiger, helper, groom, and valet of his cousin Sir Frederick Mottram, is already taking his place among the squireens of the country; and recalls to his proud and doting father the flower of that old, but now extinct race, 'the Rakes of Mallow.'

But the same ardour of feeling which rendered Sir Ignatius the fondest parent of one illegitimate son, had aggravated his aversion for the other. The Irish, who are the best of haters, as of lovers,

and whose national virtue it is to be true to their kindred even to the third and fourth generation, are alive to filial neglect, and feel more than wiser but less sensitive parents.

“How sharper than the serpent’s tooth it is,
To have a thankless child.”

It was, therefore, strictly consonant to the temperament and character of Sir Ignatius to hate the elder born of Betty Burke’s twins with the same intensity, with which he loved the younger; and when he read in the papers the pomps and circumstance of Dr. de Burgo’s professional career, and remembered his insolent sneers and cruel conduct to himself, he could not resist writing to Lord Montessor a statement of the birth and breeding of Rory Burke, and putting the illustrious patron on his guard against the ingratitude, insolence, and scheming policy of his own son.

Lord Montessor was amused by this letter, which he handed over to Dr. de Burgo, who laughed at it as heartily as his Lordship. Whether the statement was true or false, his Lordship gave himself no trouble to inquire. His confidence in the Doctor’s skill was not to be shaken; and as for the parentage and personal morality of his physician, these were of little consequence to the high-born voluptuary.

The divorce of Sir Frederick and Lady Frances Mottram, in the interim, was proceeding in due course, and, it was generally thought, would be followed by the nuptials of the foolish and faithless wife with the dull and seduced lover. Events so calculated to become topics of private discussion in all the particular circles of the great world, and subjects of interesting intelligence to the public at large, were considered as benefactions by the journalists, during a parliamentary recess,—when they formed convenient pendants to a ‘fatal fire,’ or a ‘horrible murder;’ and supplied the tardy letter from ‘our own correspondent’ at Paris, Rome, or Timbuctoo. A divorce is always a piquant theme; and in the present instance the parties were of sufficient fashionable notoriety to give a protracted interest to the epigrams of private scandal, and the coarse allusions of party malice. As Sir Frederick had placed himself in that political position, in which ‘the Tories called him a Whig, and the Whigs a

Tory,' it was a full month before the partisans of 'both their houses' ceased to make his domestic afflictions a point of attack for *damaging* their several opponents.

To Lord Aubrey and Lady Frances the press was something more lenient, and became as soon tired of serving them up for the edification of the Sunday morning's breakfast-table, as the parties themselves had become tired of each other.

Although Lord Aubrey intended to let judgment go by default, and Sir Frederick was determined not to profit by his wife's dishonour, nor to bring forward any pleas in aggravation to enhance the damages; but still 'the law's delay,' and the slow length of parliamentary forms, held in suspense the disgraceful translation: and they, whom feeling and inclination had long eternally separated, were still bound by the cold and iron links of legal bonds to each other.

Meantime, bets were booking at the clubs of London, and rumours were circulating in the coffee-houses and reading-rooms of Brussels, of which the marriage of Sir Frederick Mottram and the Princess was the subject. In an age from which no secrets are hidden, the relations in which the Belgian Princess and the English Baronet stood to each other had become as much *publici juris*, as the last English novel, published by Bentley, reprinted by Galignani, and pirated by Melini, all in one week. Domestic life, like domestic literature, has now no copyright; the protagonist and the author are alike the victims of private speculation or public curiosity; and they suffer or write for the universal public.

The Princess had added one more romantic trait to a life which already showed how far beyond the utmost imaginings of fiction is the romance of real life. She had given up to her husband's heirs (to disinherit whom the Prince had married) the estates of the Rhingau, spontaneously, and without any claim on his part; retaining only the personal property, and the pavilion in the Forest of Soignes.

Between this pavilion and her chateau in the Ardennes, she had divided the interval of time which had elapsed since the anniversary of 1835. Baulking curiosity by gay evasion, and answering an argument by an epigram, she left private interest in doubt, and public curiosity at fault, as to her real views and future intentions,

Sometimes she worked in her old *studio* in the Basse Ville, sometimes she went on service as a *Béguine*. Her active energies still seemed to require employment, and the habits of her adversity continued to be those of her preference and her taste.

“ I belong,” she said to Lord Allington, who suddenly appeared at the Pavilion of the Groenendael, during the summer of 1834, as envoy very extraordinary from Sir Frederick Mottram,—“ I belong to a propaganda, that of the age we live in ; and I cannot share my mission with less noble objects. I reject the hands of the husband of Lady Frances de Vere.”

“ What ! after having taken such pains to win his heart ?”

“ To touch, not win it, and that too, for purposes, in which my own interests had no part.”

“ Then,” said Lord Allington, “ you have been mystifying us, all along ?”

“ I have only played your own game,” she replied. “ When you English oligarchs received me into the sanctum of your mysteries political and social, you had hoped to make use of me for your purposes : I availed myself of the hint, and worked for my own ; which were those of my country.”

“ And, *femme avant tout*,” interrupted Lord Allington, “ you turned the head of the man, while proselytizing the politician.”

“ I flatter myself,” she replied laughingly, “ I have succeeded in both. But there ends my mission.”

“ And then ?” asked Lord Allington.

“ Why, then,” she replied, drawing the voluminous folds of the *Béguine*’s habit over her dress, and adjusting the white coif before a mirror, “ I shall end as I began—a *Béguine*.”

“ As you began !” said Lord Allington, sinking into the depths of an easy-chair, and gazing with amused surprise at her sudden transformation. “ Princess ! how I should like to hear your story !”

“ I will get some one to write it, like some other noble authors ; and you shall be my editor.”

“ With all my heart : but first I must learn the fate of the hero.”

“ Oh ! you would have the hacknied *dénouement* of all novels. Let *us* try something new. It may be well, perhaps, to leave one’s

reader, like one's lover, in doubt. At all events, we will try the experiment in our 'forthcoming work,' which, with the style and title of 'THE PRINCESS,' may aim at serving a great cause, while detailing domestic facts."

"Or, what is better," interrupted Lord Allington, "amusing fictions."

"We'll try both," said the Princess, gaily; "and if we fail, the honest public will, at least give us credit, for our good intentions."

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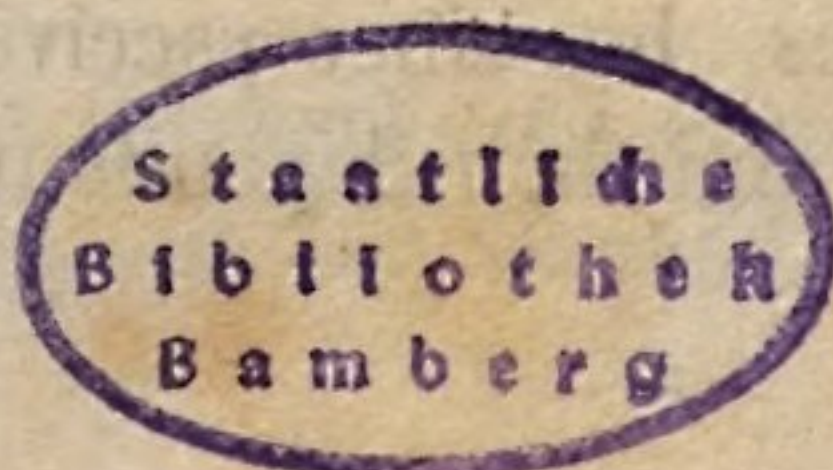
BELGIUM meantime, and her affairs, continued to advance in prosperity and stability, in illumination and in wealth. Every successive event proved that her revolution had been, not an accident, but a necessity; that it was a step forwards for the great family of Europe, and (as far as it has gone) a successful experiment in self-government. Thoroughly democratic in its principles and tendencies, the career of the new government has been blotted by no excesses, and stained by no legislative extravagances. A perfect and absolute freedom of conscience, unattained either by France or by England, has left the true interests of religion on a basis firmer and wider than established monopoly could ever boast. A total overthrow of aristocratic privileges has left property undisturbed even by a momentary alarm. The authority of reason is respected in the Chambers, and that of the laws prevails in the tribunals; and, maugre the political preponderance of a Catholic hierarchy, and the lingering endurance of much deep-rooted popular prejudice, the diffusion of a steady and beneficial intellectual light is gradually manifested even in the smaller cities.

At the aspect of so much moderation coupled with so much firm resolve, foreign states, have begun to feel the importance of the stand made by the Belgians under the banner of national independence. The old cabinets of Europe, which had kept their envoys on the confines of despotism, waiting at Frankfort upon events, have at length discovered in the 'bloody and needless revolution,' a power and a permanence worthy of respect; and Brussels, which, in 1835, had no diplomatic residents save those of France, England, and the United States has since received the representatives of the other great powers, and their dependant followers.

Fertile, laborious, commercial, and rich, Belgium has entered boldly into the question of free-trade, and is hourly rising superior to prejudices which belong neither to the age nor to her equitable government. Pressed on one side by the hostility of Holland, and on the other by the uncalculating jealousy of the French miners and manufacturers, she does not seek protection in reciprocal restrictions; but has sent commissioners to Paris, to join in that greater commercial revolution, which is the destined supplement of the constitutional Europe. This is worthy of her intelligence, and of the frank and manly character of a people formed for freedom.

The industry and commercial spirit thus announced, afford the strongest guarantees for the beneficial influence of the new government on the peace and prosperity of Europe. Admitting that the independance and political existence of a nation consisting only of four millions of people, must in some degree repose on the will of the neighbouring powers, which have as many millions of bayonets under their command, still, in the rapid progress of civilization, the domination of force is hourly declining; and it may be hoped that the well-understood interests of all the limitrophe states will range them on the side of Belgium integrity. A general war may again deluge the fields of Belgium in blood, and subject its cities to the law of the strongest; but, if the lessons of the past have not wholly been given in vain, it will be long before Europe will again be visited by a calamity so dreadful. It is not therefore too much to augur a protracted and a brilliant existence to this infant state, or to look with confidence on its future destinies, reposing as they do on the same foundations with those of French and English liberty, and the future prosperity and intelligence of the great Germanic body. Of this, however, Belgium is sure—that it can never be worse than it would have been, under the Mezentian embrace of Holland, and bound hand and foot to the will and pleasure of the three great bulwarks of ignorance and slavery.

THE END.





Morgan, Sydney,

The princess or the Béguine author of 'O'Donnel,' etc

Brussels [u.a.] 1835

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